

AMERICANS MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

HEARINGS BEFORE THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA NINETY-FOURTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

PART 2

NOVEMBER 5, 11, 12, AND 19, AND DECEMBER 17, 1975

Printed for the use of the
Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

63-053 O

WASHINGTON : 1975

BACKGROUND NOTES

The documents that follow were received by the Library of Congress from the Department of Defense pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993.

Section 1082 of the Act, titled “Disclosure of Information Concerning United States Personnel Classified as Prisoner of War or Missing in Action During Vietnam Conflict,” requires the placement of the information in a “suitable library-like location within a facility within the National Capital region for public review and photocopying.” The Library of Congress was selected for that setting, and its Federal Research Division was contracted to index the documents for input for into a computer-searchable file. Upon completion of the indexing, the document were microfilmed for purposes of preservation. Neither the Library of Congress nor the Federal Research Division is responsible for the editing and redacting of the documents. The documents microfilmed here are the same copies indexed by the Federal Research Division staff members.

The copy quality of the documents is variable, and an effort was made to obtain better copies. Wherever possible the Federal Research Division did acquire better copies, but, in many cases, no better copy than the one microfilmed was available.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

G. V. MONTGOMERY, Mississippi, *Chairman*

HENRY B. GONZALEZ, Texas
 JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY, Massachusetts
 PATRICIA SCHROEDER, Colorado
 RICHARD L. OTTINGER, New York
 TOM HARKIN, Iowa
 JIM LLOYD, California

PAUL N. McCLOSKEY, Jr., California
 BENJAMIN A. GILMAN, New York
 TENNYSON GUYER, Ohio

J. ANGUS MACDONALD, *Staff Director*

HENRY J. KENNY, *Professional Staff Assistant*

JOB L. DITBERNER, *Professional Staff Assistant*

JEANNE H. SHIRKEY, *Administrative Assistant*

JENNIFER M. MILES, *Staff Assistant*

CHARLENE S. DUNLAP, *Staff Assistant*

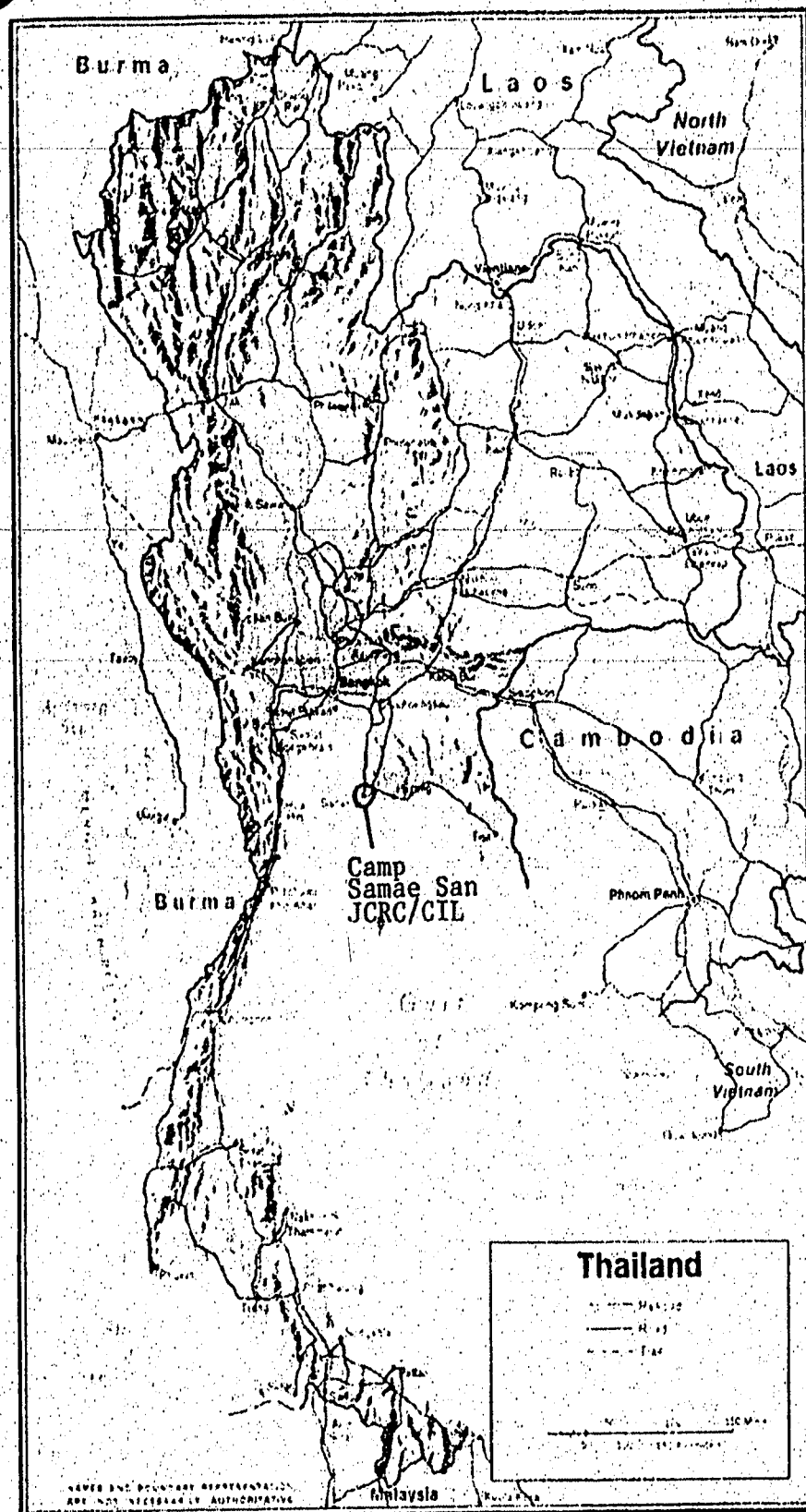
The purpose of this Select Committee is to conduct a full and complete investigation and study of (1) the problem of United States servicemen still identified as missing in action, as well as those known dead whose bodies have not been recovered, as a result of military operations in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and the problem of United States civilians identified as missing or unaccounted for, as well as those known dead whose bodies have not been recovered in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; (2) the need for additional international inspection teams to determine whether there are servicemen still held as prisoners of war or civilians held captive or unwillingly detained in the aforementioned areas.

(II)

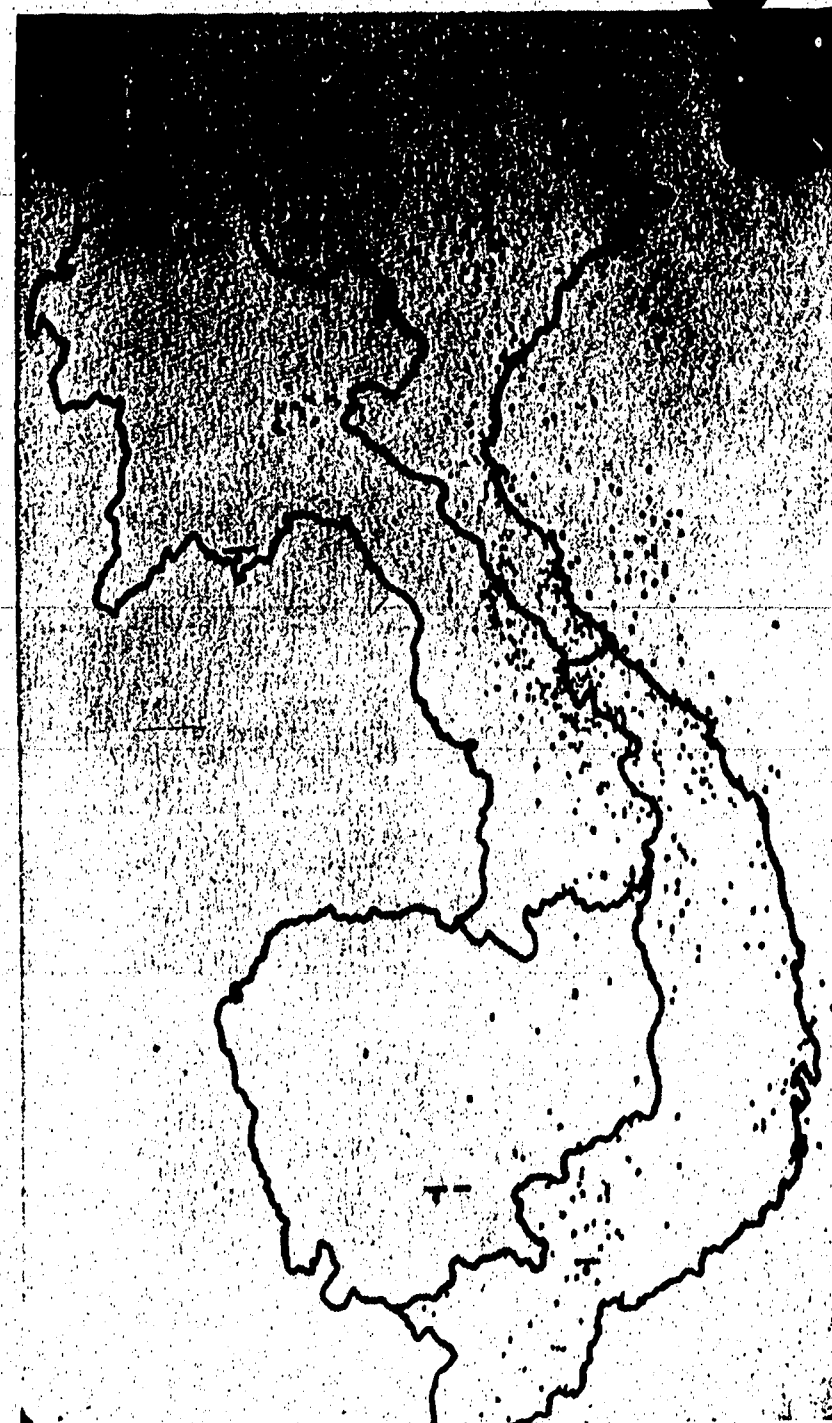


HANOI, NORTH VIETNAM, Dec. 21—CONGRESSMEN ESCORT WAR DEAD FROM HANOI—Rep. Paul McCloskey, left, and Rep. Benjamin Gilman, D-NY., carry casket of a U.S. pilot to airport in Hanoi Sunday as Rep. Richard Ottinger, D-NY., right, and Rep. G. V. Montgomery, D-Miss., stand at attention. Remains of three American pilots killed in the Vietnam War were turned over to the members of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia by the North Vietnamese. Congressmen escorted the bodies to Bangkok. (AP WIREPHOTO).

(III)



(IV)



U.S. AIRCRAFT CRASH SITES IN INDOCHINA

CONTENTS

PART 2

DATES HEARINGS HELD

	Page
November 5, 1975.....	1
November 11, 1975.....	23
November 12, 1975.....	39
November 19, 1975.....	57
December 17, 1975.....	75

STATEMENTS

Fernandez, Richard R., consultant to the Middle East Working Group of the National Council of Churches.....	1
Kenny, Dr. Henry J., professional staff member, Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia.....	75
Kingston, Maj. Gen. Robert C., U.S. Army, first commander of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, presently commander of the John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance, Fort Bragg, N.C.....	57
Montgomery, Hon. G. V., chairman of the Select Committee, re amendment of the rules of the Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia.....	23
Powers, Iris R., former national coordinator and chairman of the Board of Directors of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, accompanied by Mrs. Bobby Vinson and Mrs. Wilmer Grubb, former national coordinators.....	40
Scarborough, Jay, Ford Foundation scholar.....	58
Struharik, Paul A., Vietnam senior official for the U.S. Agency for International Development.....	24

APPENDIX

MATERIAL RECEIVED FOR THE RECORD

"A Review of Problems Encountered in the Recovery of Navy Aircrewmen Under Combat Conditions." Extracts from a 1973 report prepared by BioTechnology, Inc., for the Office of Naval Research.....	145
"Aircraft Escape and Survival Experiences of Navy Prisoners of War." Extracts from a 1974 report prepared by BioTechnology, Inc., for the Office of Naval Research.....	191
"The Biomedical Aspects of Combat Aircraft Escape and Survival for Navy Prisoners of War." Proceedings of an invited conference held April 5, 1975, at BioTechnology, Inc., Falls Church, Va.....	225
Extract from the Washington Star, dated Oct. 30, 1975, entitled "Missionaries Suffered More Than They Said".....	131
Excerpts from the statement of LCDR George Thomas Coker, appearing before the Board of Directors of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.....	103
Fernandez, Richard R., consultant to the Middle East Working Group of the National Council of Churches, prepared statement.....	132
Letter of Dec. 18, 1975, from President Ford, to Hon. G. V. Montgomery, chairman of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia.....	73
Proposed rule 2.12 of the Rules of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia.....	134

Report on Special Meetings of the Select Committee:

Informal Meeting with Ambassador Bush, September 17, 1975.....	91
Breakfast Meeting with Secretary Kissinger, November 14, 1975.....	92
Discussions with the Vietnamese Delegation in Paris, December 6, 1975.....	93
Discussion with Red Cross Officials in Geneva, December 7, 1975.....	95
Meeting with the President, December 17, 1975.....	96
Discussion with Officials in Indochina, December 21 and 22, 1975.....	97
Reports presented by Life Sciences Division, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Norton Air Force Base, California:	
"Southeast Asia Escape, Evasion, and Recovery Experience—January 1, 1963-December 31, 1971".....	255
"In-Flight Escape Experiences of Southeast Asia Prisoners of War Returnees".....	271
"Ejection Injuries in Southeast Asia Prisoners of War Returnees".....	281
"Use of Life Support Equipment by Aircrews Captured in Southeast Asia".....	293

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF WITNESSES

Fernandez, Richard R., consultant to the Middle East Working Group of the National Council of Churches.....	139
Grubb, Mrs. Wilmer, former national coordinator, National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.....	139
Kenny, Dr. Henry J., professional staff member, Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia.....	140
Kingston, Maj. Gen. Robert C., U.S. Army, first commander of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, presently commander of the John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance, Fort Bragg, N.C.....	140
Powers, Iris R., chairman, Board of Directors of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.....	139
Struharik, Paul A., Vietnam senior official for the U.S. Agency for International Development.....	142
Vinson, Mrs. Bobby, former national coordinator, National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.....	140

MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING
PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:40 p.m. in room H-227, Capitol Building, Hon. Gillespie V. Montgomery (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Montgomery, Ottinger, Harkin, Lloyd, McCloskey, Gilman and Guyer.

Also Present: J. Angus MacDonald, staff director; Jeanne Shirkey, administrative assistant; and Gareth Porter, director, Indochina Resource Center.

The CHAIRMAN. The select committee will come to order.

Our first and only witness today is Mr. Richard Fernandez.

Mr. Fernandez, would you take the stand.

We appreciate very much your coming today and appearing before this select committee. Mr. Fernandez is with the National Council of Churches of Christ. He is very familiar with Southeast Asia. He was in Hanoi and Saigon only 2 months ago. He has traveled in Paris, Stockholm, the Middle East, and Laos. He has been very active in the religious community, and he knows a lot about Vietnam. He has opinions on the Vietnam war, and we are very glad to have him testify before this select committee.

Of course, the main thrust of the select committee is to try to find out about the Americans still listed as missing in action and the repatriation of those deceased Americans whose bodies have not been recovered from Southeast Asia for proper burial.

Mr. Fernandez, you can either make a formal statement or submit your formal statement for the record. I leave it up to you.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD R. FERNANDEZ, CONSULTANT TO THE MIDDLE EAST WORKING GROUP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Mr. FERNANDEZ. What I would prefer to do is go over basically the argument I have made here. I think everyone has a copy. If other people want copies, I have some here.

Let me begin with a personal note. When I accepted the invitation of the select committee to be here last Thursday, I did not know that my wife's mother was going to die on Friday, and so I have in the last 2 hours finally seen this document put together, typed, and photo-

Report on Special Meetings of the Select Committee:		Page
Informal Meeting with Ambassador Bush, September 17, 1975.....		91
Breakfast Meeting with Secretary Kissinger, November 14, 1975.....		92
Discussions with the Vietnamese Delegation in Paris, December 6, 1975.....		93
Discussion with Red Cross Officials in Geneva, December 7, 1975.....		95
Meeting with the President, December 17, 1975.....		96
Discussion with Officials in Indochina, December 21 and 22, 1975.....		97
Reports presented by Life Sciences Division, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Norton Air Force Base, California:		
"Southeast Asia Escape, Evasion, and Recovery Experience—January 1, 1963–December 31, 1971".....		255
"In-Flight Escape Experiences of Southeast Asia Prisoners of War Returnees".....		271
"Ejection Injuries in Southeast Asia Prisoners of War Returnees".....		281
"Use of Life Support Equipment by Aircrews Captured in Southeast Asia".....		293

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF WITNESSES

Fernandez, Richard R., consultant to the Middle East Working Group of the National Council of Churches.....	139
Grubb, Mrs. Wilmer, former national coordinator, National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.....	139
Kenny, Dr. Henry J., professional staff member, Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia.....	140
Kingston, Maj. Gen. Robert C., U.S. Army, first commander of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, presently commander of the John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance, Fort Bragg, N.C.....	140
Powers, Iris R., chairman, Board of Directors of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.....	139
Struharik, Paul A., Vietnam senior official for the U.S. Agency for International Development.....	142
Vinson, Mrs. Bobby, former national coordinator, National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.....	140

MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING
PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:40 p.m. in room H-227, Capitol Building, Hon. Gillespie V. Montgomery (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Montgomery, Ottinger, Harkin, Lloyd, McCloskey, Gilman and Guyer.

Also Present: J. Angus MacDonald, staff director; Jeanne Shirkey, administrative assistant; and Gareth Porter, director, Indochina Resource Center.

The CHAIRMAN. The select committee will come to order.

Our first and only witness today is Mr. Richard Fernandez.

Mr. Fernandez, would you take the stand.

We appreciate very much your coming today and appearing before this select committee. Mr. Fernandez is with the National Council of Churches of Christ. He is very familiar with Southeast Asia. He was in Hanoi and Saigon only 2 months ago. He has traveled in Paris, Stockholm, the Middle East, and Laos. He has been very active in the religious community, and he knows a lot about Vietnam. He has opinions on the Vietnam war, and we are very glad to have him testify before this select committee.

Of course, the main thrust of the select committee is to try to find out about the Americans still listed as missing in action and the repatriation of those deceased Americans whose bodies have not been recovered from Southeast Asia for proper burial.

Mr. Fernandez, you can either make a formal statement or submit your formal statement for the record. I leave it up to you.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD R. FERNANDEZ, CONSULTANT TO THE MIDDLE EAST WORKING GROUP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Mr. FERNANDEZ. What I would prefer to do is go over basically the argument I have made here. I think everyone has a copy. If other people want copies, I have some here.

Let me begin with a personal note. When I accepted the invitation of the select committee to be here last Thursday, I did not know that my wife's mother was going to die on Friday, and so I have in the last 2 hours finally seen this document put together, typed, and photo-

copied; not having the same kind of time to work on it that I would have if we had not had to deal with a death in our family.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate the gentleman coming. If he had asked a delay in appearing before the select committee, we certainly would have delayed it, but I do appreciate your coming today. I understand the circumstances under which you appear.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I put some biographical material in only for the record.¹

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection let's submit the statement that you have here for the record.²

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I come down fairly hard on this committee coming to some assumptions that they all can agree on. As you know, I have talked to a number of members of the select committee when they were searching for their staff director, and one of the things that became clear to me, even though you had begun to have meetings already, was, number one, common assumptions had not been arrived at, and, more importantly from my point of view, there were some things in the works at that time that sounded as if there was going to be communication either with various MIA groups or with one's own constituency.

My own view is that this select committee, as is clearly indicated by people who are here today, will have communication with various MIA groups which I basically support, and most importantly, support open meetings as far as that is possible. I think that the United States generally, and people who still bear the pain of the Vietnam war, and I mean by this the MIA families, do not need any more letters from Washington or from anybody saying people are at work on this issue. I know of those letters and communication, and I think what I have sensed in the last year and a half is that some would like the situation to really change instead of getting one more promise.

The common assumptions that I hint at above can only be arrived at after due consideration, after various hearings such as the one that we are in today. It is my contention that unless common assumptions are developed, and I mean put down on paper, and there may only be four or five where there is common agreement, that it will be very hard to move as a committee.

I have tried to make some suggestions here as to what I think, knowing what I know, and having the experience that I have had, you should consider as possible common assumptions. You may have information already, or you may gain information in the future that would argue that one or more of these assumptions ought not be yours, and you certainly have every right to develop your own.

I will read these, and you know they are based on several years of experience primarily with the POW but then the MIA questions as well, and after many discussions with people who have been to Vietnam and back, as well as conversations I have had in North Vietnam primarily, but also in Paris. They are very simple, and I know they may be debatable.

One: There is no data available to suggest that the Vietnams will assist the U.S. Government in any way with regard to MIA issues

¹ See p. 139.

² See p. 132.

unless it is within the broader legal framework of other outstanding issues contained in the Paris agreements.

Two: Unless one is a racist, and I am not looking at anyone in this room by the way, the phrase that has been used many times during the conflict in Vietnam "Asians don't care about human life the way Americans do" there is no other reasonable assumption than but that the Vietnams are refusing to move on the MIA question because of other outstanding issues.

Maybe you can think of other reasons they would care not to move, but the one I have heard verbally expressed in Washington in the last month and a half as I have talked to people is something that runs along "Asians don't care about human life the way Americans do."

Three: The Ford administration, correctly sensing less and less interest with regard to the legacies of the Indochina conflict, and I mean by this from deserters and resisters, to MIA families, to aid to Vietnam, to normalization of relations, to you name it, there is less and less interest, and they sense that correctly in my view, is presently pursuing a course with regard to the Paris agreements that at best can be called disinterest.

Four: There is little possibility that any member or staff personnel connected with this select committee will have any kind of positive contact with the Governments of Vietnam on this issue—MIA's.

I refer you back to testimony or memoranda that Gareth Porter¹ submitted to this committee a few weeks back and other conversations I have had with Vietnamese in New York.

Five: There is some reason to believe that Americans who are in close communication with the Vietnamese might, if they were clear and in agreement with your committee's goals and the means by which they are to be pursued, be willing to get clarification on specific issues for the PRG and DRV which would allow the select committee to fulfill its task.

I am talking about persons such as myself. I know when I talked with Mr. Montgomery sometime ago, both by phone and in his office, I made it clear that people such as myself, who had been very much involved in the American peace movement over the last 10 years do not come to a committee like this to testify very easily. We think on many occasions the MIA-POW issue has been used as a political football, and I am honest enough to tell you that I believe it has been used by many sides as a political football. I was in Laos when Ross Perot arrived with 90 reporters. I was also there with five other women who were there before Ross Perot, and who were looking for their husbands and sons. There have been many uses and misuses of this issue, and I, for one, am not prepared to allow myself to be used.

I think this is a general mood you will find with people who have been active in the American peace movement. They are not ideologically committed to oppose the work of this select committee, but they do wait, as I am sure people wait in many other sectors around the country, to see what it is that you will be about, and how you will go about obtaining positive results.

Six: To the extent that there is dormant or real interest on the MIA issue and/or other outstanding issues contained in the Paris agree-

¹ See "American Missing in Southeast Asia—Part I", p. 89.

ments, Americans are more and more prepared to follow a path of reconciliation rather than one of retribution with regard to all of these issues.

Understand I said to the extent that there is any interest at all. I do not believe, as I move around the country on another assignment now, that many people even remember Vietnam. That is part of our problem.

Seven: While disinterest in the Vietnam war legacies is significant, this is not to suggest all of the MIA organizations and peace organizations have folded up and gone home. There is important and impressive work still being done by both MIA groups and peace organizations around all outstanding issues in the Paris agreements.

Clearly out of those seven assumptions you may wish to debate all or some of them. You may wish to add your own, but what I am trying to suggest here is that you need to develop a list of your common assumptions in order to move ahead together.

I would not be here if I didn't think you could develop such a list. I wouldn't spend the time. I think you can do that, but I know also it will be a struggle, because you represent many different points of view. Someone told me the select committee was divided with hawks and doves, and I don't know what that means anymore.

Today's meeting and similar hearings are clearly intended as a means by which the select committee will gather information. I indicated in No. 1 that you need to make clear what you think about as a committee. It will be a means by which to carry on discussions and negotiations with other parties. It will be a means by which you can build allies in and out of the Government, and I think you will need them in and out of Government, and finally it seems to me what you agree upon as assumptions will make it much easier to take account of new information and insights.

In short, it is hard to integrate new perspectives or information into a vacuous situation. I would think in the next month or so you will have had enough information and testimony to develop something that is tentative, and everything that I know about in this world is rather tentative, but within that context then, and then when someone raises a new point you haven't heard before, you will have something against which to evaluate the new input.

On page 5 at the bottom I have a deletion. Understand I just proof-read this statement as I came through the door. I want to strike the last three lines of the page ending with the word "Vietnam" and beginning with the word "realizing", and the first word on page 6.

The CHAIRMAN. You say you want to strike that?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I want to strike all of that. It was typed off a draft.

As I understand the goal of this committee, and the date may be a little bit off, by September 15, 1976, the House Select Committee on MIA's would like to have a final accounting of all MIA's, missionaries, and newsmen presently missing in Indochina and Vietnam. You may wish to amend that but generally that is what I understood your primary goal to be. I think that should be kept in front of the committee at all times.

The CHAIRMAN. You might say Southeast Asia.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Southeast Asia is probably more inclusive. I would expect that.

The CHAIRMAN. Including Laos.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Let me just highlight one other thing. I don't want to read this. I find my own voice boring. I don't know about you. What I tried to do under 2 on page 6 is run through a, b, c, d, e, different alternatives that I have heard suggested over the last month about what this committee should be about.

The first is, of course, that you should rename your committee, which I think is an act of hari-kari, but that was seriously suggested by people I know.

The second is to begin another propaganda campaign a la Ross Perot. I think that might get a little news in the paper for a few weeks in this country. I think it would die out quick, and certainly as far as I know anything about it, it would not have very much effect at this late date on the Vietnams.

The third one, of course, is to use your committee and your staff to lobby the State Department and the President. I know there is some difference of view on the select committee itself as to which one of those roads would be more profitable. I know they have all been lobbied before, and Presidents before them have been lobbied before Mr. Ford, and as far as I can tell, that has not done a lot of good. There may be people in the room who think it has done some good, and I would be willing to listen to that evidence. I don't think in the present situation this committee or its staff lobbying on the MIA question is going to be very persuasive.

Given the firm positions of the Vietnams and the present administration here in Washington, once we become clear about that you can just fold up and go home. You can say look, they are all so fixed and firm, we are so small, have so little money, and nobody cares anyway, we quit.

I argue I don't think that is a very positive view to take about your job. What I argue for basically is that I think you can develop a strategy which is going to be supported by the data you are given in all of your hearings that aims at changing the U.S. policy on the Paris agreements. I think you have a right to do that under the rubric that you are operating, and I think there are things to be said for moving in that direction once you are clear. Understand that I feel rather certain about this approach, once you are clear that there are no other strategies that make sense.

I think there are things that we are staring at in the future in terms of climate that are crucial to this kind of a strategy. Without trying to be abrasive, and I vote Democrat, I rather like our President for some of his basic human characteristics. I sense that he is trying to open up a bit, trying to let Congress in on the action a little bit, and that is a major turn, in my lifetime at least. I sense that that could be important to the work of your committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Say that again.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I sense that the present administration is prepared to open up a little bit to the Congress of this country on matters of foreign policy, in a way in which no other President in my lifetime was open. You can better gauge how open he is than I, but I sure would play that for all its worth in this situation.

Under No. 2, I would like to have you scratch in the third line the word "emerging" and put a comma—I am sorry, under No. 2, the second line—

The CHAIRMAN. Page 8?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Yes, page 8, No. 2, on the second line, a comma after the word "politicians" and scratch the word "emerging" in the next line. If there seems to be a way of finally putting all of these issues with regard to Vietnam behind us, I think that point I have made before, that many Americans are prepared to put these issues behind us.

I would suggest on page 9 that there are broad coalitions of groups that I think can be brought together on this kind of a strategy that would greatly enforce the work of this committee, and I think it will need enforcing by outside groups. I mentioned MIA groups. I put major Protestant denominations. That should really be major religious denominations. I know, for example, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations would be interested and I assume the U.S. Catholic Conference, labor organizations, and peace organizations.

Finally, the force of such a coalition in an election year would be ominous for any politician to try to oppose.

I really believe that if you draw your circle wide enough on this issue, both in terms of your strategy and your allies, you can win. If you are narrow either on your strategy or your allies, I think you are in for a dead end.

I simply outline in the next to the last page here four things that I always ask myself as someone who has spent a good part of his life organizing. Is there a clear goal? I have suggested one. You may want to amend that. Are there sufficient resources? You sure have enough money and staff, and you have what, 10 persons out of the House. Are there enough real and potential allies to help? I think there are more allies than either you or I can imagine as we sit here, and does the particular strategy that we are about to embark on accomplish our goal? Does it have the highest possibility of success among all the other strategies we can choose from?

That is a critical question. One does not argue a strategy if it is not the best one for success. That is the only reason to adopt a strategy, because you think it will work. If you develop a strategy that you think is the best one but you know it won't work, you should close up. There is no point in going on if you have a strategy that is doomed to failure. That is a waste of your time.

I assume, and that is what my presence here testifies to, that you can develop a strategy that will unlock the door not only to the MIA question but other issues as well.

I end up on a personal note about the pain of that war, the deserters and the resisters, being with POW families in this country, with several in Laos, phone calls to my own, burying a young man, a brother of a friend of mine out in Colorado. Having been in Vietnam and Laos, during and after the war now, I can attest to the kind of destruction that went on there from the high altitude bombing to the rape of Saigon, if that is a good enough word, and I really think that this committee has the potential, the live potential, of tapping some of the best things in our country and among its people for adjudicating these outstanding issues.

We do not need more harassment. We do not need more promises that cannot be fulfilled. In my view you have the potential of developing a strategy that indeed will see the end of all the questions that we have been looking at for so long. I will end with that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Fernandez, for your honest and frank testimony.

Mr. McCloskey.

Mr. McCloskey. Mr. Fernandez, when you suggest a strategy to us, would that indicate that you don't feel we can persuade the President? I don't find your testimony consistent. You say on the one hand that you think Ford is open to persuasion, to permit the Congress to be involved in this matter.

Second, you suggest that you don't feel that in discussions with the administration that we could be effective in causing him to perhaps change his posture.

If you assume, as the testimony before us has indicated, that there is no chance of talking with the Vietnamese about the MIA question unless we are also able to talk or at least be accompanied by the people who talk about articles 21 and 22 of the Paris agreement, why should we have difficulty in your judgment in persuading the President that it is essential to open up new negotiations, new initiatives with the Vietnamese that would discuss all the areas, the MIA accounting, perhaps ordinance, assistance with Public Law 480 food, any number of areas other than the outright appropriation of money for assistance to the Vietnamese? I frankly don't see any difficulty in getting both an audience with the President and expressing that point of view.

Why do you feel in advance that we might not be successful?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I always think it is great to spend the least amount of energy to get the best possible results. I was simply observing I think, Congressman, that there have been a lot of people talking to the President, this President and his immediate predecessor, about MIA's and POW's. There have been dinners at the White House. There have been a lot of things happen around that issue, and at least my recollection of those events in the past, is that they have not been too productive.

Mr. McCloskey. Nobody has made this particular attempt before, so far as I know. Am I wrong in this?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. No, no. I am just saying that I listed that as an assumption of mine. It could be challenged. It seems to me once the select committee is clear about what it can agree upon, you may want to begin with the simplest thing first, sitting down with the President.

Mr. McCloskey. I come back to your testimony. You have acknowledged that you like the President or at least you have some tremor of hope.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. At least his wife.

Mr. McCloskey. You feel that he will be open to congressional discussion on this. Yet you say flatly that you don't think it will have any hope of success if we try to persuade him.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I guess my assumption is that these issues have been outstanding for quite some time. It is not just yesterday that these have become outstanding. If it really just took an hour of the 10 or 8 of you walking down, sitting down and having a heart-to-heart talk, my only assumption is that it hasn't been done before is that he hasn't had time to sit down and think about them. I do assume he has thought about them. I do assume he has reasons for not having acted before this time. I do believe you have an obligation

to talk to him privately before you begin any kind of ongoing strategy.

I am just suggesting, given the lack of activity that I have perceived from a distance, that your lobbying effort, and that is what I call it, would not be successful.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. You don't have any factual basis on which to make that opinion, do you? You don't know of any earlier efforts that any group such as ours has ever made to the President?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. It is all circumstantial, sure, I am just saying that we have spent a long time in the last almost 2 years since the Paris agreements. It has been what, 6 or 8 months since Saigon went into the hands of another government. Again, he may have been very busy. All I am saying is that right now the reason for your existence is because it is still a problem. I will put that in the plural. There are still problems.

Again, I am only guessing. The only thing that I have seen are some remarks by the Secretary of State over the last 3 or 4 months where he said if the MIA situation were ameliorated, if that were dealt with, there may be some reciprocal activity on our side, but there has been no movement as far as I know.

Again, you have had closed sessions, I assume with State Department people, already. You may have within those sessions come across ways in which the government has tried through third parties to deal with the MIA question. My only point I guess, Congressman, is that at least as I read the newspapers, our Government has not made a concerted effort to reopen those issues, one or more of them.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Let me say in the interest of time I accept your last statement, but I find no basis in any testimony that you have given to justify this expectation that this committee might not be successful.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Ottinger?

Mr. OTTINGER. My problem is in knowing just how to address this statement. I can understand, knowing where you come from, your skepticism about the select committee, which is very severe; but I perceive on this committee a very real and serious purpose to try and resolve the MIA question, and a complete understanding on behalf of everybody that to do that, and to be successful, we are going to have to open up talks with the Vietnamese on a broader range of issues, which are certainly humanitarian on their side. I am not sure that the select committee, seeing what it has done so far, deserves such a verbal beating. That is what caused me some pause. I do think there is a genuine desire to catalyze negotiations with the Vietnamese and to work out a strategy that will be successful. We would welcome your help in that.

In terms of your idea of organizing with outside groups—I do think we will need the help of such outside groups. I think we will have to act in such a way as to foster the confidence of some of the outside groups that do have contact with the Vietnamese, and on whom the Vietnamese feel they can rely. I wonder if you could suggest to us some of the best ways we might proceed? You haven't talked about putting together a coalition. Are you thinking of formalizing something?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. In preparing this I actually had two parts of it, and I left off the second part, which deals with that question. I think what I tried to suggest here was that I think that the possibility of developing a coalition, if the people being invited to enter that coalition are clear about what you are clear about, could be easily done, but in the present situation, where you haven't quite figured out where you are going to come down and how you are going to approach the problem, which is understandable, I think, if we can use those words on the left and right, it would be hard to put that coalition together because you haven't arrived at a place where you can say "Here is the way we would like now to proceed. Would you come and join this kind of thing? Can you support us in different ways?"

When you come to that point, and depending on what it is the select committee sees itself doing over the next period of time, I think that coalition could be available, yes, sir. I am very optimistic about that.

Mr. OTTINGER. Let's get a little more specific because this select committee, with its time constraints, has to get specific. You think it would be helpful for this select committee to issue a statement of some kind, a charter embodying a strategy plan, something which stated the things that we think ought to happen at this juncture, in order to make movement on this issue, and then write invitations to some specific group of people and ask them to come and discuss this with us, to help us?

What do you envisage?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I am not long on public statements or charters but when you say put down what you think about on a few pages and then look around as you would go shopping to see who wants to join us, yes, I would do that. I think some of the groups that I mentioned here would take a very, very close look at that.

Mr. OTTINGER. You say there is little possibility that any members or staff personnel connected with the committee will have any kind of positive contact with the Governments of Vietnam, and indicate that we ought to change our name. Don't you think the Vietnamese are sophisticated enough so that they can appreciate that this is probably the only leverage that there is, the missing in action issue, to achieve some type of normalization of relations? There is no other issue of which I am aware that would command anything near a majority in Congress.

There are certainly individuals and groups in the country, they happen to include me, that would like to see a normalization of relations with the Vietnamese because they think it is in our best interest and because it is a humanitarian obligation, considering the destruction that we wrought on Vietnam, but that is certainly not a basis by which you would get a normalization of relations and all that goes with it from the majority of the Congress at this point. Don't you think there would be a recognition of that by the Vietnamese, so that we could deal as a committee with them?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Directly?

Mr. OTTINGER. Yes.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I can only tell you what has been said to me and what I know of contacts with respect to Congress people in the past.

Now please note they may change their minds. There is no data that they are going to negotiate anything with any Member of Congress. The closest the Vietnamese got to dealing with a Member of Congress was when they released a list of POW's to Senator Kennedy. That is No. 1.

No. 2. The question of this being the only lever they have left—

Mr. OTTINGER. No, the only lever that we have left.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. That we have left? I guess my assumption is that while they may off the record meet with Congress people that have been antiwar in the past, to be fraternal, to be open, even to tell them what they think about the MIA Committee, share that view with them. I would be deeply surprised if it ever went beyond that.

I am saying that would be a very select group of Congress people that would enter into that kind of a meeting, and I know of meetings that have happened very recently in this country with the Vietnamese and some people on the Hill, and the data in those meetings is not that they are negotiating with Congress people. They are explaining their point of view.

In one of the conversations I had with the PRG representative in New York, he was very hostile about the committee's name. Forget the people on it, just the name. They are hostile about that. They may get over that if the right Congressperson came and talked with them.

The CHAIRMAN. Would the gentleman yield? Did you state why they are hostile? We don't have any pride in name. It just happened to be a name to identify the overall objective of the committee. If you have a better name, we would be open to suggestions.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Please understand I am not defending their position but just stating it.

Mr. OTTINGER. They think that the committee ought to be designed to address the broader issues?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. They think the U.S. Government should and any committee that is designed to address just part of the issue, they are not very much interested in. It has nothing to do with the persons on the committee at all. It is simply, here is a committee to come and select out that one issue and there are many still outstanding and they are not very interested.

I would say in the conversation I had there was some hostility and I didn't ask the question. I wasn't there asking questions about the name.

Mr. OTTINGER. I wonder also about your assumption that they would only talk to people who have a history of being antiwar. After all, to get the majority in Congress, which is what we are seeking to do, to make some real progress here, we need a pretty broad spectrum. If we on this select committee can get a broad spectrum to support movement by the United States towards normalization, in the context of getting an accounting for our missing in action, then I would think that they would be sophisticated enough to appreciate that.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I think they would appreciate that and understand that, yes; but that is a little bit off right now. I mean we haven't gotten to that.

Mr. OTTINGER. Your basic thesis is that we have to prove our mettle?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. No; not at all. It is not proving your mettle. I am not here to ask you to prove your mettle. You are all elected officials.

If you are asking me the other question, namely, how can the issue be adjudicated, I assume finally when it is adjudicated it will be adjudicated not by this select committee but by the State Department.

My view, which I have tried to express strongly, is that I had no intention of lambasting this committee. From my point of view you are my last chance. I mean you may be their last chance. You are also mine, because my fear is that you will spend 1 year and not get a damn thing, pardon the word, and you are down the drain, and God knows who is elected next, and we will treat the MIA's and aid to Vietnam all alike, the hell with them, and everybody will get forgotten then, so you are my last chance. Let's be clear about that. I mean very deeply personally you are my last chance. If you don't get any success, they are not going to create another one next September under any name, so be very clear.

I am only trying to suggest to you that in all the conversations I have had and friends have had, not only in the past but most recently in the last month-and-a-half, I think that if 2 months from now a coalition were in the offing of a large number of groups covering a broad range, and five people from that coalition including two members from this select committee, and one from the MIA's, and one from a church organization, and one from a religious group, went to the Vietnamese in New York or someplace else, they may have a very interesting discussion and talk and get things clarified that weren't clarified before. I think that is a possibility. I am not saying that is a surety. I think it is a possibility, but finally all those people would be kind of obligated to come back and share that and say here is what we were told, and I am just suggesting I don't think you would be told anything new.

The difference is that that broad coalition is told it together, and that would make some substantial difference it seems to me in work that would have to be done here. I have not expressed these views or discussed this particular thing with anybody. I have talked endlessly with people in Washington, with people in various antiwar groups about whether I should take the job if it was offered, whether I should testify, are you being used by your government, so these views really aren't my own, but I think I know enough of the people involved at least in the religious organizations by their policy statements and in person and in a broad spectrum of the peace movement to say yes.

If it really is for results, taking the whole problem and using this particular issue as a focal point, yes, I think that coalition is available on that side.

Mr. OTTINGER. I just want to say that my impression is, with everybody on this select committee, I can assure you of the seriousness of our purpose, our desire to make movement on this issue, and our recognition that to make movement on this issue we can't negotiate, but we can, I think, help define the issues that have to be negotiated and help get the State Department to negotiate, to create a climate in which that can happen and I do think that is what we are about and welcome your help. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Fernandez, I regret that some of us were a bit delayed in getting to another meeting. I have listened to part of your testimony.

The goal that you have talked about, I would assume, would be a goal of opening the door of communications so there could be a dialog. I would assume that that would be a common goal, and then to explore normalization of relationships. Of course, while we would like to see other committees at work in this area, the fact remains that there are no other committees at work seeking this, with maybe one exception of the Foreign Trade Committee that may be exploring this.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Foreign Trade?

Mr. GILMAN. Yes, but the fact remains that this is probably the most active committee that is exploring opening the line of communication. I don't think our State Department is at work. At least we are not aware of their attempting to do that, so while a better name may be appropriate, and while we may have better objectives than we do have, the fact remains that we are the only organization right now in the Congress that is seeking to open the line of communication.

Based on that, I would urge whatever groups you have to join us in that basic endeavor. What would be your thoughts about setting that as an initial goal of just opening the line of communications to start a dialog, and joining with us in that endeavor?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. First of all, it has been mentioned a couple of times, please note that better name is not my problem. I don't have a problem with your name. You can change it or leave it the same as long as the purpose is the same.

Mr. GILMAN. A rose is a rose?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Right. I put that in because that is something that someone has seriously put to me, that it is kind of important in one sector of the community. I don't want to be assigned the task of wanting to change your name.

Right now I know your objective to be one thing. That is all I know. That is the goal that I put at the bottom of page 5, and I asked the people before you came in to scratch basically the bottom three lines, continuing the sentence with the words "in Vietnam" and scratching "specific goal." That is what I understand to be your objective. I think that you can have that as your objective, and develop a strategy that is broader than that, because you may decide that that is the only way you can get your objective accomplished.

I represent only myself, but when you ask the question can we not begin an open dialog and an open discussion, a number of the groups with which I am familiar are really asking, well, that is a goal that is rather narrow, not debating that that is the reason that was set up at all. I am not hostile about that at all, but we want to know how they would like to accomplish that goal. Once they are clear as to how you think you can best do that, and that is your decision, that is not the decision of the whole country, that is not the decision of the Vietnamese, that is the select committee's decision.

It is a very hard one, I am mindful of that, because on that it seems to me hangs everything else, and if your decision finally is to develop a strategy that is fairly broad, that is to say where you are clear that you are not going to get the MIA thing resolved until these other issues are in tandem, not separately but at once, are resolved with it, that is a broad strategy.

If you come to that decision, there are a lot of people around who would help you do whatever you think at that time is important,

whether there are open discussions or dialog, you put a coalition together in the United States.

There are lots of people around who want to move in that way, I believe, but to ask them to come into a discussion just on that action goal for many of the groups that I know about, they would consider that too narrow. They would simply consider that too narrow a basis.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Fernandez, we keep hearing more and more reports that the Vietnamese are interested in establishing relations with the United States and opening up trade and having direct communication. It would seem to me, since we have this vehicle established, that we are an ideal conduit for information of that nature back to the Congress, and whether we call ourselves the select committee or any other name, we are here, we are interested in establishing a dialog, and there are other groups that are interested in establishing a dialog.

What I am suggesting to you is that these other groups could very well join with us. While we may have a narrow scope, we are certainly a conduit of information back to the Congress and back to the State Department. I think making use of that facility, and taking advantage of this vehicle, could be beneficial not only to our group, but also to the Vietnamese. I pass that on as a suggestion to you for your comment.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I am not sure I am not repeating myself. I would not be here if I didn't think that it was important to be here. I have tried to report as accurately as I can presently what I know to be the Vietnamese attitude about the select committee, again not the persons, just the establishment of this committee. They see it as of now, knowing that Gareth Porter and Dick Fernandez are even testifying here, as one long line in a succession of Americans being concerned about their men who got killed, imprisoned, missing. They connect this committee with Ross Perot.

You know, it is a long way, 7,000 miles. They don't read all the ins and outs. They don't read the Congressional Record each day. For them that very narrow train is the same narrow train they heard 6 years ago.

I think their view can be altered, can be changed, depending on what you see as the manner in which you will approach the problem, but to simply say that you are concerned about MIA's for them, as far as I know, is the same old American policy about being concerned about, you know, American men, and not being concerned about normalization of trade.

Mr. OTTINGER. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILMAN. I will be pleased to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. OTTINGER. Have you seen the chairman's telegram to the DRV and the PRG in Paris?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Recently? No.

The CHAIRMAN. He wouldn't have had the opportunity to see it.

Mr. OTTINGER. I think that is too bad, because the approach that we made was in the terms that you suggest. I think you could be most helpful at this point in suggesting ways we can go about the formulation of a strategy such as you suggest. I don't know if we need any more urging that this should be done. At this point we need help in knowing how to carry it out. The chairman's telegram made

it very clear that we were interested in opening up a dialog on the broad range of humanitarian issues that are outstanding, with the MIA issue just being one of them.

I followed up my original letter with a letter that was more specific along the same lines, and that is what we have done so far in terms of making a public declaration of the purposes and attitudes of this committee. The chairman has sent, with the authorization of the select committee, a clear statement that we would like to meet with the Vietnamese in the context of discussing all of the outstanding issues and problems which they might want to raise and that we would discuss along with the MIA issue.

What more would you suggest that we do to set that framework?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. What I have tried to suggest in this paper, and I think to Congressman Montgomery when I was in your office, I implied it in one of the memos I sent to the select committee, I do not believe the problem with the MIA or other issues is external to the United States problem. I mean, I think it is what I call an inside problem, and I would welcome at the earliest possible moment Congressman McCloskey or others going to see President Ford saying we want to get this over with. We don't want to waste energy talking unless we can do something.

If the question comes back, we sent two telegrams—did you send them to Hanoi or Paris?

The CHAIRMAN. Paris.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Which means they cable them back to Hanoi. That could get lost in the cablegrams sometimes. Their only, as far as I know, input about this select committee to date is what they read in the paper, and what they have gleaned from some meetings primarily in New York from persons like myself. What I have shared with them is what they knew already, that the committee has just begun. They are not clear yet as to which way they are going to move, and that they know, as well as you and I know, that you are not going to negotiate anything anyway. That is quite clear. That is just kind of repeating ourselves, so when you send a telegram they are sitting over there receiving a cable from a committee that can't negotiate anything, they are suspect, as I indicated earlier, so what should be their response?

If you ask me the question the other way around, that this committee 2 weeks from now has a meeting with the President for an hour-and-a-half and they talk to him, and they get a positive response, we have no problem, right? It is all over. They get a negative one, it is good to know the reasons. It is good for you to know, to see what the problem is.

Again, my assumption is that it will be negative. I would hope it is positive. I would love to see you close up and get everything over with but I assume it is negative. I would love to have it the other way.

The question I guess from me, Congressman Ottinger, is not whether you then send another cable to the Vietnamese. Depending on what the response is with our own Government, what makes sense in terms of a strategy? President Ford or Dr. Kissinger may tell you all of a sudden things that you have not heard before or that I know about that makes the situation even more blue than it seems as we sit here. I don't assume that is true. I think they are going to give you rather

formal reasons that you probably already have been briefed on by the State Department to begin with, and so you have to make up your mind. Is our best strategy to cable Paris and ask them if they will meet with us, so that if they do, they will communicate once again what I think they communicated many times over already—most recently this summer—I guess to you yourself, so the question is what is the purpose of the meeting.

They do, of course, see it as dealing with our Government. I mean the fact that they don't think you can negotiate, they are very clear they are dealing with our Government.

Mr. OTTINGER. The purpose would be to define the areas of possible negotiation, and we can take that back to the State Department. If we think the framework is reasonable and progress can be made on the MIA issue on some reasonable basis, then we can put pressure on the State Department to move off of what you assume to be a negative position, which has been in the past a negative position. I have no idea what their position is.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Do you have a view now though? That is what is confusing to me. Do you have a view now as to what you might receive from the Vietnamese, I mean based on what you already know about their response to similar letters or whatever?

Mr. OTTINGER. There are lots of things that I don't know. There are a whole range of issues that the select committee discussed when Mr. Porter testified which you might amplify on, which he thought that the Vietnamese would be interested in, but we haven't heard it from the Vietnamese, ranging from help with detonating or defusing ordnance, to formal recognition, to aid for reconstruction or at least a recognition in principle that reconstruction aid, provided for in article 21, was tied with the missing in action problem—a whole range of things that might get this whole question off of dead center.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. May I ask how important it is? We are aware in other parts of the world, and I think now in the Middle East, where it is hard for certain parties to sit down. It is very complicated.

Mr. OTTINGER. We have not grandstanded. You don't have to worry that we are going to go out and arrive with 90 members of the press corps. That is certainly not the way we have proceeded.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. My question is have you thought of using third parties for that kind of discussion? I am not suggesting. I am just asking that as a question.

Mr. OTTINGER. Not so far in the deliberations of our select committee.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. But that is a possibility?

Mr. OTTINGER. Yes.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I would say, and Gareth can check me out, I am sure that there are third parties available who would be trusted by yourselves and probably trusted by the Vietnamese that would be able to—you write down your 20 questions and they would probably give you a 10-page paper, with not a lot of rhetoric.

I just tell you that from what I know not only about the Vietnamese but the Middle East people and people generally, they have difficulty with round or square tables. Shall the Vietnamese represent themselves or everybody. It is complicated. Third parties I notice sometimes are not productive but they do come back with the information

you need. Whether you act on it is another matter sometimes, but I do think if you have a series of questions that in a matter of 2 or 3 weeks it could go back and forth 2 or 3 times and there could be more information than you could conceivably use.

My assumption right now—I notice Gareth in some of his testimony separated primary and secondary issues—my assumption is that most of the data is in on primary issues. If, after talking with the President, you decide that really what is holding the whole matter up are secondary issues we need more light on, I think that that kind of energy abounds and would be trusted by your committee, and be reasonably trusted by the Vietnamese. I just think that your person, anybody here, would be, as far as I know, hard for them to deal with at this time.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have finished.

The CHAIRMAN. Your questions have been most helpful as have the comments of the witness.

Mr. Guyer?

Mr. GUYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the testimony of Mr. Fernandez and his motivation and desire to be of help. We are a group that doesn't need to build a big scenario on this; that many of us came here a little bit at wits end to know where to begin, how to start, what to do, how to get going.

I think that our role is twofold: One is to have all the information, input, helpful suggestions, implementation that we can get. That is why people like you are here. The other is to do something about it.

The hardest assignment we have had is to be able to talk to somebody. It may sound simple but we have been surrounded by a wall of silence. Slogans have not done it. We haven't done it with any kind of shortcut campaign or publicity gimmick. We haven't done it with talk. I don't think I completely share your views on how little or how much they know. I think they know much more than probably you think they do. I am not sure what impressed them the most, but I have tried to have dialog with the families of these people in Ohio, and they have tried most everything they know to do. It is not very satisfying.

Our problem is not your problem. Meeting with the President and meeting with the Secretary is our problem and that is the responsibility of the select committee, and we will do that. What I think would be helpful to us is to know how to get a breakthrough. When you were over there, did you hear any talk of Americans who were still living? Did that enter into any of your conversations? Do you know of any?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. On the visit in late August and early September in North Vietnam I tell you that the situation was so formal that we did not get into a substantive discussion with the North Vietnamese. We did with some South Vietnamese that were in the North for the anniversary who were members of the third force, non-Communist people in the South.

In the South it was pretty much of the same thing, which was interesting because every other time I have had a meeting with the Vietnamese we are talking about POW's, Ross Perot. That was all over the place and this time there was not a mention. The only thing that was close to that was—well, that is not important.

Mr. GUYER. Ambassador Bush said about the same thing, that you can't use one occasion to secure conversation for another. In other

words, if you are on a structured dialog, they will not deviate from it and so you can't use that as a surprise opportunity. Maybe what we need here, and I think this is where your role would be most helpful, I am convinced that whether it is a bread table, a communion table, a dinner table, or an end table, at some time you are going to sit down, and our job is to make that happen as fast as we can, whether it is in Paris, whether it is in Saigon, whether it is in Laos, wherever it happens to be.

Can you be of help to us? We have had no authorization. It has been clearly stated we are not policymaking people. I am sure the President is not going to say to us, "You go over and make a deal." He is not going to say, "You go over and we will resume trade." I am sure he will never say that, but I do believe—and I think you have brought it out in testimony—that the other side is not about to talk unless it is a multiline conversation. They are not going to talk on a single subject. I am convinced of that.

Do you have contacts by which this select committee or through other people helping this select committee could hasten the day of sitting down with somebody who could speak for them? Could you be helpful to us in that way? You mentioned that there are other groups, maybe another religious group. You are speaking for the Council of Churches?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. No, I am speaking—

Mr. GUYER. I know, for yourself, but you do belong to the Council of Churches?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. But understand the work I do for them is on the Middle East.

Mr. GUYER. I think you made reference that there are other groups, whether lay or religious, that could be of help to us.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. As I just said to Mr. Ottinger, I think it is possible if it is for the purposes of clarification, information, that this select committee could ask some third parties, in which it had confidence. Don't ask people in whom you don't have confidence. I think Gareth and I could think of the names of some people that would help you that the Vietnamese would have confidence in.

Mr. GUYER. We have no objection, not speaking for the chairman, having other people work with our select committee if they could be useful in arranging a meeting or—

The CHAIRMAN. I think our philosophy on this select committee is we will take anybody we can get to help us reach our mission.

Mr. GUYER. That is right.

The CHAIRMAN. Any suggestions at all.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I said that as carefully as I could. You are asking questions of clarification and information. That is all a third party could ever do. I think they would be delighted. I think they would probably prepare answers to any questions you may have, and if you wanted to go back again through a third party to get more clarification they would do that again.

Mr. GUYER. We have no objection, speaking for myself, to sitting down and talking in terms of what they would expect us to do as long as they would talk about this subject along with it. I wouldn't be at all surprised whether it is trade, travel, recognition, reconstruction, or whatever, there is no objection to what they want to talk about, if they will keep our central theme, because that is the only purpose we have in

this select committee. We will take any road we can to get there, but our objective is to keep faith with these families, with America and with the Congress and so far this is the only committee which is instructed to do that which I don't think is a hopeless assignment.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. No, neither do I.

Mr. GUYER. If I thought so, I wouldn't take a place on the select committee.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. And I wouldn't be here.

Mr. GUYER. I think there is still a way in which people can get together and resolve the problem, if we do it in the right climate.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. The thing that keeps coming back to me every time we talk about talking with the Vietnamese either directly or indirectly is I am sitting here trying to imagine, why the Vietnamese would say, "No, we would like not to sit down and talk about these issues," with someone from our country that can change things. If you add it up from their point of view, not from our point of view, they have everything to gain.

Mr. GUYER. Our problem is that it is easy to hear that, but you will recall in the *Mayaguez* incident, our President couldn't get through except through a radio, so it is not as easy as you make it sound.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Let's not go into that.

Mr. GUYER. I am not trying to postmortem the war or an incident. I am only saying that part of our problem is how we can reach responsible people through any medium. If we can go through friends of these people or people who have confidence in them, we will be happy, but you see our mission, and coming up with Thanksgiving we want to do something immediately, and that is part of our agenda, isn't it, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. That is right.

Mr. GUYER. These people are holding up their own schedules and are prepared to go anywhere. We are going to in the meanwhile do our homework which is extraneous from yours but we would like your assistance and from your background you could be of great assistance.

Mr. GILMAN. Would the gentleman yield?

You mentioned that you would be willing to suggest some third parties to us. Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to request the witness to provide such a list of third parties for our committee to consider.¹

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection would the witness be willing to do this?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. In consultation with some friends, yes, I wouldn't do it on my own.

Mr. GUYER. Would you also suggest people at the other end who might be approachable to whom we could talk, individuals?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. People at the other end?

Mr. GUYER. I mean whether they have official capacity or not, who could speak knowledgeably in this area?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Are you talking about Vietnamese living in Paris?

Mr. GUYER. Either Paris or in Vietnam. Sometimes an ambassador will not talk to you where somebody else would.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Tell me if I am wrong. I don't know of any way of introducing an American Congressman to a Vietnamese in Govern-

ment. Am I correct? I repeated it so often I don't know if I believe myself so often.

The CHAIRMAN. We will be glad to hear from Mr. Porter.

Mr. GUYER. For example, if the head of, say, the Council of Churches, had a contact in North Vietnam with an individual, we would like to know the name of the individual. It is as simple as that; someone to whom we might at least get a breakthrough. That is what we are talking about.

You said a moment ago that you saw no reason why they wouldn't want to sit down. I am just saying—give us the names of two or three people who would sit down.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I was not suggesting that I would either think it useful or would want to, I guess, suggest two or three Vietnamese. I was suggesting that if you wanted third party Americans that would be helpful to your committee, that that is the group I would be prepared to do. I am thinking do I give you the bishop of Saigon or Hanoi to have the Council of Churches write to?

Mr. GUYER. It could be any group, Red Cross, church, et cetera.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. If I can say it, as far as I know, Communist governments don't function the way we do. They really don't believe in third parties as far as I know. They may, but my experience is that they like to deal directly. We do like third parties for every set of reasons. I am not casting aspersions. I have the view that in Hanoi the bishop of the U.S. Catholic Conference could write the bishop of Hanoi and not even get a letter back.

Mr. GUYER. We wrote to the Ambassador and never heard either.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I am just saying I think that overly complicates it. I think from what I have heard today, see if I am correct, that for this committee the MIA issue is central. You realize that although it is central, you most probably will have to deal with a variety of other things that are still outstanding. That you are prepared to perhaps ask a third party or parties, you may want two, to either go to Paris or elsewhere to talk with Vietnamese in the PRG or DRV, asking them a series of questions, 10 to 50 questions that you would like responses to, considering not only the primary objective or primary issue but perhaps other ones that you know already they are concerned about, and that you may want to go back two or three times to make sure you are absolutely clear.

In the meantime you may be talking to the President and Secretary of State as well. I think that is a major step forward.

Mr. GILMAN. Would the gentleman yield?

You mentioned that the Vietnamese would be unwilling to talk with a Congressman.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. That is all I know. I am just telling you what I think.

Mr. GILMAN. If I might comment, during the height of the war some of us did communicate directly, and I spoke with Vietnamese representatives in Vientiane. Why would that change now after the war is over a change of attitude? I don't quite understand.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I cannot tell you. I can only tell you what I have been led to understand.

Mr. OTTINGER. If I could ask, you mean to say—

¹ Retained in the files of the select committee.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Pardon me?

Mr. OTTINGER. We understand the difficulties the Vietnamese may have initially.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. If you are asking me if a Member of the U.S. Congress—

Mr. OTTINGER. That is what he is asking.

Mr. FERNANDEZ [continuing]. Could talk with the Vietnamese? Without looking at anybody it has happened in the last 2 weeks, so sure.

Mr. GILMAN. My impression—

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I am just saying I am a member of it.

If you go as I am, a member of the Select Committee on MIA's and perceive that today, trying to get a discussion going on that basis today it is very difficult.

The CHAIRMAN. In case the committee and other Members of Congress from the International Relations Committee, from Appropriations, from Commerce, other Members besides this committee, were to go to Paris or even go to Thailand or go to Laos, and they would see us, who do we need to see in North Vietnam or South Vietnam that has any authority?

I got the impression from you, if we go to Paris, they have to get their orders from North Vietnam. Is that what you are saying? Who do we have to see?

The CHAIRMAN. That is correct, assuming they are Members of Congress.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. If it is Members of Congress and the contact—

The CHAIRMAN. A little louder, please.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. If it is a Member of Congress, and the contact is outside of the United States, that would probably be cleared through either Saigon or Hanoi.

The CHAIRMAN. And if we met with the Government of North Vietnam in Paris, would these persons we met with have any authority? They would be able to at least talk anyway, just like our committee. They could talk with some authority, is that correct?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Again, we are back to our same discussion that we just had with Mr. Gilman. If you are saying someone would go who is known to them, let's just say for the sake of argument they have been known to oppose the war, Mr. Ottinger, he may have a discussion with them, but if he goes there with the express intent right now as far as I know dealing with the MIA question even if brought up in perspective, I am only suggesting his name is known to be part of this select committee and they may find it in their interest not to see him.

If you are talking about, to pick another name, Congresswoman Abzug, who simply is in Paris and she calls up "Can I come over," they will have tea and crackers and go home. That is not what you are asking for. You are asking for some important contact. You are not asking just for tea and crackers and I am saying that as I know now, and that could be part, you see, of what a third party finds out, that you could have a whole range of questions around is it possible for two members of our select committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you saying we should go the third party route instead of the direct route of Members of Congress directly contacting the PRG and DRV?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Understand that most of the conversation has concerned the Vietnamese and third party questions. I put the third party in because that is the only way I know that you can get your questions answered.

My own view is that if you have a need to get that kind of information and clarification, I think that is important, but I think that after you get it, the hard work is still going to be back here, but I think it is important if you think it is important to get that information and clarification. My only suggestion at this point in time, knowing what I know, is to use a third party. You may in the context of a third party discussion ask is it possible to have two members of our select committee, you know, knowing that we have a broader interest to speak with you here in Paris. They may respond affirmatively but I am not going to even guess as to what the response would be.

Mr. GUYER. I would like to ask one further question.

Do you have any personal mail back and forth now?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Mail?

Mr. GUYER. With people?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Some in Paris.

Mr. GUYER. It would be possible if you wanted to, to convey the general mood and climate of our select committee to the proper people there and maybe get an answer back as to their acceptance?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I would like to deal with that a little bit later. In theory, sure. In practice you should know that these words aren't lost on me.

The CHAIRMAN. Could you and Mr. Porter get a feel, if they even got our cablegrams in Paris, and what action they will take in response. It is a logistic problem of making arrangements to travel to Paris. It is a problem with the Members to change their plans.

We sent a telegram about 2 weeks ago and we hadn't heard from either of the Governments of North or South Vietnam. I am wondering if you and Mr. Porter and some of your contacts could find out their response, I would pay for the phone call personally if that would speed it up.

Mr. Porter, if there are no objections—

Mr. PORTER. To respond for myself, and I have discussed this with Mr. MacDonald as well, my own experience has been that although it is always possible to call up and find out if they got the telegram, this kind of personal contact really doesn't add anything or subtract anything from the basic question that they have to answer. I think it wouldn't really make any difference for one of us to make a phone call.

The CHAIRMAN. You have answered it.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I think you can answer that what I was expressing is that I think it is diverting my bridge to inquire after your cable. That is a little complicated.

The CHAIRMAN. That is fine. You have answered it.

If there are no further questions, Mr. Fernandez, we appreciate very much your coming today. You have been helpful to the committee. The select committee now stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:55 p.m. the committee was adjourned.]

MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1975

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING
PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA,
Washington, D.C.

The Select Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:02 a.m., in room 334, Cannon Building, Hon. Gillespie V. Montgomery (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Montgomery, Gonzalez, Moakley, Ottinger, Harkin, Gilman, and Guyer.

Also present: J. Angus MacDonald, staff director, and Jeanne Shirkey, administrative assistant.

The CHAIRMAN. The meeting of the Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia will come to order.

The Chair will entertain a motion to amend the rules of the Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia by adding a new rule to follow clause 11 of rule 2. The proposed new clause 12 of rule 2 pertains to television, radio, and still photography of our open meeting. A copy of the proposed new rule is at your desks at this time. Do I hear a motion to accept this new rule? ¹

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Chairman, I make that motion to accept it.

Mr. GUYER. I second.

The CHAIRMAN. The motion has been made by the gentleman from Massachusetts and seconded by the gentleman from Ohio. Is there any discussion?

All those in favor of this motion will indicate by saying "aye."

[Chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. All opposed, "no."

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it.

The motion is adopted.

I might say to the gentleman who has just come in, Mr. Harkin, that we are amending our rules so we can invite television, radio, and still photographers into our open meetings.

Is there objection this morning to permitting the press to come to this open meeting? Do I hear a motion on that?

Mr. MOAKLEY. I would make a motion to allow press, TV, and still photography coverage this morning.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Mr. GUYER. I'll second.

The CHAIRMAN. You have heard the motion and the second. Any discussion?

¹ See p. 134.

All in favor indicate by saying "aye."

[Chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. All opposed, "no."

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. We are now in open session and the press, television, and radio is invited to participate.

Our witness this morning is Mr. Paul Struharik from Norton, Ohio. He has been serving in Vietnam as the senior official for the U.S. Agency for International Development. In March of this year he was captured in the central highlands of South Vietnam.

Mr. Struharik was eventually taken to Hanoi where he and eight other Americans and five foreign nationals were released on October 30. As one of the Americans who recently experienced capture and release, I'm sure that this witness' testimony will shed new light on the subject that concerns us so deeply.

I might say to Mr. Struharik that of the three areas that this select committee functions in, one of them is the concern for the American civilians who were not able to leave South Vietnam when the fall of South Vietnam came in March and April of 1975. So this is one area that our select committee has as its responsibility. We appreciate your being here this morning. I know you have had a trying experience.

We would like to hear your testimony and after your testimony I am sure members of the select committee will have some comments and questions.

Would you like to go ahead and make your formal statement? We are glad to have you before the select committee.

STATEMENT OF PAUL A. STRUHARIK, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. STRUHARIK. Mr. Chairman and members of the select committee, first I want to express my appreciation to you for giving me the opportunity of appearing before your committee.¹

The battle for Ban Me Thuot began about 3 a.m. on the 10th of March. At this time there were explosions and small arms fire at the city airport and artillery rounds impacted near the ARVN 23d Division Headquarters located in the city. We were monitoring the GVN radio frequencies during the attack and at the beginning the GVN did not believe that this signaled a major attack. The initial fighting subsided somewhat about 5 a.m. However, it resumed an hour later.

At 6:30 it was reported that an assault wave passed through Buon Ale on the southern edge of Ban Me Thuot City. At 7 a.m. the other Americans in Ban Me Thuot arrived at my compound. At 8:30 I issued weapons to my local employees and at approximately the same time People's Self Defense Force members ran past my house reporting that the NVA were sighted on the northern edge of Ban Me Thuot.

NVA infantry passed my house at approximately 10 a.m. At 10:30 I sent a number of my local employees home. Slightly after this at 11, NVA soldiers took up positions on the street near my house. From that time on until our capture a few days later, all of us inside the house maintained absolute silence.

On Monday morning we heard a GVN radio report that 15 tanks and infantry were attacking the city from the west. Also, NVA artill-

ery and antiaircraft weapons were moved into positions within the city. They had been previously located to the north of the city. Fighting during that first day was mostly at the city airfield, province military headquarters in the southeastern portion of the city, and in the downtown market area. In the early afternoon ARVN rangers tried unsuccessfully to retake the city airfield from the northeast and GVN artillery units located outside the city were concentrated to the northeast of the city to support the rangers. The province military headquarters was destroyed by NVA artillery barrages during the late afternoon and fighting ceased at that location.

Early in the afternoon on the 10th I was able to establish radio contact with aircraft sent from the consulate general in Nha Trang for this purpose. I was able to continue talking with the aircraft up until our capture on the 12th.

On the morning of the 11th the antiaircraft and artillery weapons remained in position in the northern part of Ban Me Thuot City. At least two of the weapons were located within 100 meters of my house. That morning there were numerous air strikes near division headquarters and the major fighting seemed to take place there and in the downtown market area. I believe the division headquarters was overrun by early afternoon as we could hear the sounds of fighting moving progressively to the south and east. Just prior to nightfall, there was extremely heavy fighting in the downtown market area and I believe that this area was captured at that time.

By the morning of the 12th Ban Me Thuot was for all intents and purposes completely in the hands of the attacking forces. The attack itself made heavy use of conventional artillery and assault tactics by armor and infantry. The forces involved were apparently regular army units. There was no fighting at night and the attack was three-pronged, launched from the north, south, and west. After the city itself had been captured, the NVA eliminated the districts and the outlying outposts.

Our capture took place at 12:25 p.m. on the 12th of March when North Vietnamese Army elements entered my compound in Ban Me Thuot.

After some initial confusion, our party of nine was moved in our own vehicles to a temporary holding area about 1 kilometer north of Ban Me Thuot to await nightfall. The party included Mr. Peter Whitlock, an Australian with the ABC, Mr. Jay Scarborough, American, with the Ford Foundation, Dr. and Mrs. Phillips of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Mr. and Mrs. Miller also of the SIL and their daughter Luanne, Mrs. Mitchell, a missionary, and myself. About 8 p.m. we were loaded into the Millers' Landrover and driven to a screening camp about 20 kilometers north of Ban Me Thuot. We stayed at this site for 3 days while Vietnamese prisoners arrived and were separated according to position and rank. Mr. Enrique Tolentino, a Filipino AID contract employee, rejoined our group at this time.

At 7:30 in the evening on the 15th of March, we departed from this camp by truck with about 35 GVN senior military prisoners. We were taken to a prison camp about 60 kilometers northwest of Ban Me Thuot. When we arrived there were about 40 prisoners in the camp. This later increased to about 1,500. Two Canadian missionaries, Norman and Joan Johnson, joined us at this camp and this increased the

¹ Biographical data of Mr. Struharik appears on p. 142.

number of our group to 12. The camp was quite primitive, consisting of bamboo and thatch huts of varying sizes within a bamboo fence. Food and medical supplies were limited possibly because the NVA didn't expect such a large number of prisoners and were not prepared to care for them. Our group left this camp at about 9 a.m. on April 18. We were transported along with wounded and sick prisoners by truck to a camp located near Duc Co in western Pleiku Province. The truck was crowded and Mr. Whitlock and Mr. Scarborough were asked to wait for the next truck. However, the next truck never arrived and they ended up walking 100 kilometers to the new camp. The facilities near Duc Co were again quite primitive. We assisted in constructing the camp which was located deep in the jungle. There was also a shortage of food and medical supplies at this site. However, in mid-May when Mr. Johnson became seriously ill, he and his wife were moved to better facilities at Thanh An district about 30 kilometers west of Pleiku City. Luanne Miller and her mother were also moved to the new area because of concern for Luanne's health.

On May 31 the rest of our group moved to the new camp at Thanh An which was located in a former resettlement site. At this camp Arellano Bugarin, another Filipino, joined our group and the families were given separate sleeping rooms. Living conditions here were generally improved and as of the 1st of June, our food ration was doubled. We lived inside the wire with the Vietnamese prisoners until July 6 when we moved to our own thatch house outside the fence. We were still guarded and our movements were restricted, however, the North Vietnamese seemed to attach some significance to this move of 100 meters. We lived at this house, for the first time doing all of our own cooking, until August 15 when we departed for North Vietnam. We traveled by closed truck from Thanh An to Hanoi and subsequently, the Son Tay prison. Here we joined Mr. James Lewis who at that time had been at the prison for about 4 months. At Son Tay every effort was made to improve our diet and care for our physical well-being.

During the 2 months at this site, our food ration was again increased. We were given clothing and received daily medical care. Also at this camp our interrogations and what could be called political lectures increased. Our stay at this prison ended on October 30 at which time we were released to representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees who had carried on negotiations with the DRV on our behalf.

Throughout our captivity the DRV/PRG policy seemed to be to keep us alive and in as good condition as possible. This policy was hampered at times, however, by local conditions particularly during the first 3 months of our captivity. We were never subjected to physical mistreatment by our captors and the general attitude of the rank-and-file soldiers seemed to be one of curiosity more than anything else.

We were all interrogated to different degrees during our imprisonment concerning our activities in Vietnam. Mr. Lewis and myself were more intensely interrogated than the others because we were American officials. For myself these interrogation sessions culminated in 3 weeks of solitary confinement just prior to our release in October. I was moved to another camp at that time where I lived alone because I had what was called a "bad attitude" and because I was alleged to have engaged

in organizing the other prisoners. Nonetheless, during my solitary confinement, my physical treatment remained on a par with that of the other prisoners. At no time during our imprisonment did we see or meet other foreign or American prisoners. The Vietnamese Communists were in fact quite sensitive about this matter. Whenever the subject arose, they went to great lengths to explain their position, that they had in fact released all the prisoners at the time of the cease-fire agreement. As to the reasons for our release, I can only guess. I feel that we were freed in order to see what would happen, particularly with respect to reactions on the part of the American Government. Officials of the DRV who talked to us indicated a willingness or possibly even a desire to open a dialog with the American Government; however, on their own conditions.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. If you or other members of the select committee have any questions, I will be happy to try to answer them at this time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for that complete and very factual accounting of the experience that you have had. I would only ask about two questions and then we will move to each member.

Did you actually, in your compound, actually participate in the fighting? You mentioned the weapons you gave to the South Vietnamese employees who worked for you?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No. I actually issued weapons when the fighting was a bit north of us. I also gave instructions that we were not to initiate contact but only return fire. There were no GVN military outpost positions on the street in which I lived and we never engaged the NVA. After the assault had passed us, I took back the weapons and sent some employees home. I decided it was not too bright to try to stand off what I estimated was a one- or two-regiment sized attack. There were 19 of us in the compound, including 6 women and 3 children.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any feel or know why the North Vietnamese decided to release these 9 Americans and the 5 foreigners when we know of well over 50 Americans in the Saigon area, and also other foreigners that have not been released? Did you learn anything after you were captured about these Americans? When you went to Hanoi, did you learn of any action that might be taken to release these Americans at a future date?

Mr. STRUHARIK. In this area and in most areas concerning my knowledge, or our knowledge, of what was going on in Vietnam or in the world, you must realize that we were treated as prisoners. We were kept completely incommunicado with very little information being given to us as to what was going on in the rest of the country. We did manage to pick up some information prior to August from families visiting our fellow Vietnamese prisoners. When this happened, we were aware or we had a good hunch that there were Americans and other foreigners who had remained behind in Saigon. We did not know for sure. As to what the DRV/PRG policy is toward those people, we were given no information.

As I said, we were treated as prisoners. I believe we may have been the only group that was treated strictly as prisoners of war. From what I have heard since I have been out the group, primarily in Saigon, has been subjected to the same kind of treatment that we were. I cannot say for sure; I really don't know.

The CHAIRMAN. You mentioned in your statement that you did not see other Americans and that the North Vietnamese were quite emphatic that all Americans were released following the cease-fire and the Paris Peace Accords of 1973. Was that also true for Son Tay Camp which, as you recall, was one of the camps where we went in a special forces team in the early 1970's to see if we could release some of these Americans that may have been moved out. Could you reiterate again what you said in your statement? Did you see or hear of any American military personnel that were still being held in North Vietnam?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No; at no time did we see or meet or have any definite word of any other prisoners, military or civilian, other than ourselves.

The CHAIRMAN. How many camps in North Vietnam were you in?

Mr. STRUHARIK. In North Vietnam, the group stayed at the Son Tay Prison throughout their stay. I was at another one about 30 kilometers to the west in the foothills of the mountains, a rather isolated area. We also stayed overnight outside of a prison while enroute from the south to the north. So we touched at least three prisons while in North Vietnam.

They have a very closed society and a very secret way of operating. That type of information would not be necessarily available to us, naturally. But we had no contact and no information on any other possible prisoners.

The CHAIRMAN. Why did they mention that they were holding no more Americans? Did you and others of the American group ask about the missing in action?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Yes. This would come up usually in relationship to our own circumstances, that is, well, "The war has been over for 4 months now. You let the pilots go after 2 months. What are we doing here?" This would lead on to a discussion of "You will be released sometime just as we released the other prisoners, even the pilots who came to bomb North Vietnam." That is the way that subject usually arose. They never brought the subject up themselves. It was usually in response to something we asked.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Gonzalez?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Struharik, you estimated that it seemed to you at the time that the compound you were in was overrun, it was one or two regiments attacking. You talk about numerous air strikes. Obviously these air strikes were from the South. Under the Paris cease-fire agreements—you may or may not have been acquainted with the publicized terms of those agreements—but to your knowledge, did the North Vietnamese violate these terms by exceeding the size or the strength of the allowable armed forces in the Paris agreements in the South?

My understanding of the agreement was that at the time of the cease-fire it would be as is, and the only provisions would be for provisioning to keep the forces as they were at the time of the cease-fire. Do you have any knowledge about infiltration or addition thereto after the cease-fire?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Well, my position was as the province representative of the American consul generally. My mission was not involved in intelligence-gathering activities pertaining to infiltration of North

Vietnamese forces. I really don't have any specific information on the number, size, or type of forces which were infiltrated after the cease-fire. Just naturally on general knowledge or things I have seen, I assume there was heavy infiltration of forces and weapons after the cease-fire. I assume that.

Mr. GONZALEZ. How far away from Hanoi and Saigon were you located? What is the distance, if you know?

Mr. STRUHARIK. From Saigon to Ban Me Thuot it was approximately 300 to 315 miles to the northeast of Saigon. South of Hanoi it is about 1,200 kilometers. I remember one road sign we saw that was about 1,200 kilometers.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Then why would you think that the Vietnamese, the Communists, would, after your captivity, take you all the way up to Hanoi instead of down to Saigon?

Mr. STRUHARIK. That is a question we asked ourselves many times. From the point of our capture until our release it was apparent that we were at all times within the hands of the North Vietnamese Army.

As I stated, we had a number of linguists in our group. The Vietnamese have accents, northern, central, and southern. I asked one of the linguists to estimate for me what percent of the people we had talked to or had the opportunity to hear speak, what percentage of that group was northern, southern, and central because I was curious, also. The gentleman estimated—and this was in August—that at that time he had probably heard 200 or so people speak and he estimated that of that 200, 5 or 6 were central Vietnamese. The rest were all northerners. From this it was pretty easy to determine that we were in the hands of the North Vietnamese Army, which would represent the DRV.

We received different stories on this at different times. One theme, naturally, is that "We are all one country and we are all working together;" that is the PRG and the DRV. At other times the difference between the PRG and the DRV seemed to be greater in that we were told that we were moved to Hanoi because the PRG had requested the DRV to take us there because facilities were not available in the South where we could be housed according to our needs.

This just cannot be true because there is an extremely large number of facilities in the South, many more than in the North where we could have been housed.

As to why we were moved north, I suspect that there may be some internal jockeying for position between the DRV and the PRG, and that we were in fact in the hands of the northern group, and they wanted to keep us there, and also wanted to get us to the North where they could talk to us extensively and have representatives of their different ministries come in and talk to us to gain information or get their practice in, whatever they were doing.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Can you give us the type of discussions that were had with you after you were captured and brought up to Hanoi, in general terms?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Most of the interrogations to which I was subjected were primarily targeted at discounting my story of being a USAI official involved in development type activities. What they thought, or at least what they told me they thought, was that I was a

military officer posing as a USAID official and controlling or advising the military effort in the province.

The other possibility was that I was a CIA agent or a DIA agent trying to gain intelligence and trying to control the so-called puppet Government of the South. These were primarily the two points that they stressed. They wanted me to admit that I was either A or B. Also I am sure they were interested in gaining as much information as they could about American activities in the South for the purpose of future control of the South, to try to figure out exactly what had happened and how to counter the remains of American influence.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much. I have exceeded my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Guyer.

Mr. GUYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Struharik, we are indebted to you for making this trip. You are from suburban Cincinnati, is that right?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No, sir, from the northern area, up around Akron.

Mr. GUYER. I see. I misunderstood. You were with the AID. When the hostilities got pretty imminent, did Director Parker give you a choice to come home or stay?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Director Parker did not call me up, no.

Mr. GUYER. I didn't mean the Director, but I meant your orders.

Mr. STRUHARIK. Thinking back to before the attack, before the increase in hostilities, there were naturally indications that something was up, that something was going to happen. But I don't think I, myself, or anyone else with whom I was associated at that time, was aware of the intensity and the high level of attacks that were going to be coming. In effect, the attack against Ban Me Thuot, its size and the way it was done, the tactic of hitting the city first, was a surprise.

Mr. GUYER. What was the nature of your work?

Mr. STRUHARIK. I was engaged in monitoring the end use of American foreign aid. This varied from province to province as to which American aid program was more important. In Darlac the resettlement program was about the highest priority.

Mr. GUYER. I believe AID was in the process of building new facilities at the time everything collapsed.

Mr. STRUHARIK. Yes.

Mr. GUYER. Do you speak Vietnamese?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No. I speak one of the dialects.

Mr. GUYER. So you could monitor in one of their languages?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Yes.

Mr. GUYER. One thing I was curious about: Have you read any of the reports given by your fellow prisoners after they got back? For example, a Los Angeles paper reported a little different story.¹ For example, you said you were with Richard and Lillian Phillips.

Mr. STRUHARIK. Yes.

Mr. GUYER. They reported that they lost from 20 to 50 pounds. They said they were on a skimpy diet of rice and became sick, almost to the point of death, slept on wet ground, had no privacy. Later they reported there were 1,000 prisoners using one latrine. Are you familiar with this?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Yes, this was early on. As I mentioned, the facilities in our first two camps were primitive. I didn't want to go into extreme detail.

Mr. GUYER. No. I wanted to be sure.

Mr. STRUHARIK. That is accurate. It was extremely primitive.

Mr. GUYER. The thrust of this, it seems to me, is that they held back a little on comment and then went into detail. They said they saw no atrocities, but did describe some pretty rugged treatment. It doesn't sound as though they were given the kid glove treatment, all in all.

Mr. STRUHARIK. No. We did not receive kid glove treatment, especially the first 3 months. Things were especially rough. I lost about 35 pounds. Our diet for the first 5 weeks was basically rice and salt and a little grease water. It was all the rice you could eat.

Mr. GUYER. Was there a lot of dysentery?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No. It amazed all of us that that was not a large problem.

Mr. GUYER. Did any of the people with whom you were imprisoned or engaged talk at all about having any knowledge of anyone being held prisoner through the long period of the war? I don't mean the time you were captured. You were captured March 12 and released October 30. What about the people who might be alive? Did you hear anything at all from any civilians or military?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No. This was one of our main concerns. Mrs. Mitchell's husband had been captured in 1962 by PRG or DRV forces in the south. She continually questioned everyone she ran into about where her husband was. We were quite aware of the possibility and looking for any traces of other Americans that might have been there, but we found none.

Mr. GUYER. Your original statement that you were held incommunicado seems to indicate that there was not much communication between those who might have been held. They could have been prisoners and been 30 miles apart and never have known it.

Mr. STRUHARIK. That is true.

Mr. GUYER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Moakley.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Actually, I was going to pursue the line of questioning my colleague did. You were saying you were never subjected to physical mistreatment. You were talking about additional mistreatment, other than the primitive care and the lack of care that you received.

Mr. STRUHARIK. I'm talking about physical torture for gaining information.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Actually, when they were interrogating you, and asking whether you were with the CIA or military, at no time were you physically tortured?

Mr. STRUHARIK. That is correct. They have thorough interrogation techniques which rely primarily on mental pressure, keeping you without communication, 100 percent dependent on them, reminding you that your fate and destiny is in their hands, and also the "good guy" and "bad guy" technique. I read a lot of spy books, so I know a lot about this. Some of it is building you up with good news and trying to shake you with bad news. There is quite a bit of mental

¹ See p. 131.

pressure, that is true. The last 3 weeks, especially, it was really pretty intense, but as far as physical mistreatment, there was none.

Mr. MOAKLEY. You stayed in solitary confinement for 3 weeks. Was that a result of your lack of cooperation with them in answering questions?

Mr. STRUHARIK. I believe so.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Can you go into a little more detail on that?

Mr. STRUHARIK. As has been mentioned here, we still have people back there, and certain areas are pretty sensitive. I would be glad to talk to you individually, but I don't want to throw it out.

Mr. MOAKLEY. You are saying you do have information that you would not want to make public at this time?

Mr. STRUHARIK. That is true. It is not serious, but just going through the details.

The CHAIRMAN. If the gentleman would yield, I would not want to cause any problems to other Americans who were still in the Saigon area but I feel this information is going to come out eventually. We certainly hope that the witness can give us as much information as possible but we will leave it up to his judgment. My experience has been that when you have a number of prisoners, the information will come out in the public eventually anyway. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Getting on the same vein, was there any agreement prior to your release that certain things would not be talked about when you returned to this country?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Not among us, no. We had thought of that possibility if some of us were released and others left behind; but in that we all went out together, and we had no agreement to that effect, no.

I don't want you to misunderstand what I am saying here. I don't have any gruesome details that I am withholding. I am just saying that physical living conditions were primitive. Now, naturally, we do not have the same basis of communication because I lived in Vietnam for 7 years.

Mr. MOAKLEY. What you are saying is primitive in this country may be a cold-water flat, but primitive in Vietnam is a different thing.

Mr. STRUHARIK. That is right. A brief example: Some of the prisoners and myself were at times catching winged termites and locusts which we would fry over a fire and eat. People in the United States get up tight about eating insects, but I happened to have done it before I was a prisoner so it is not that big a thing to me. So I am not withholding any gruesome details at all. But if you get me started in going through a day-by-day, blow-by-blow account, we would be here all day.

Mr. MOAKLEY. That may be very interesting to the select committee and I would not mind going off your prepared statement and talking about some things that you may feel the select committee may be interested in. As I say, what I gather is said is because some missionaries are still left behind; so there are certain things you would not want to talk about in public, and that is one thing. The select committee respects your wishes and we would be glad to meet you in private. If there are other things you cannot discuss at this time, you see the rea-

son for the meeting this morning is so we can decide what actions we can take from this point on.

Mr. STRUHARIK. I think this has been revolving around our treatment primarily for the first 3 months. As I said, later on it got better. "Better" is relative. After the first 3 months, we more or less stopped losing weight. We managed to more or less start holding our own. The first 3 months were in the jungle with all the conditions, insects, heat, primitive facilities, including housing, latrines, the whole bit. During those first 3 months, we were concerned as to whether or not we would live through it, yes. We always had a "down deep inside" faith and hope that we would be released eventually, and we also felt that we would not be killed purposely, not taken out and shot. We were concerned that we might not live through it physically.

Mr. Johnson came very close, I believe. He was very weak and very ill, but he was removed in time to a medical facility. Once again, what is a medical facility? It is a shed with a tin roof where there happens to be more medicine available.

Mr. MOAKLEY. I noticed in your statement that you were kept in solitary confinement because you had what they considered a bad attitude and that was because they felt you were organizing other prisoners to do certain things.

Mr. STRUHARIK. They thought I was organizing the other prisoners to "resist." Bad attitude means refusing to give information, not agreeing with their point of view of world history, and Vietnamese history, and American involvement in particular and talking back, that sort of thing.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I call on Mr. Harkin, let the record show that we have a quorum at the select committee meeting. Mr. Harkin.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. Struharik, how long have you been with USIA?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Since August of 1969. That is roughly 6 years.

Mr. HARKIN. How long were you in Vietnam, since that time?

Mr. STRUHARIK. All of that time was spent in Vietnam in the Darlac Province. Prior to that I was in the military also for a year or so in Vietnam.

Mr. HARKIN. Was that in the Army?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Right, the Army in Darlac, also.

Mr. HARKIN. How long were you there?

Mr. STRUHARIK. The whole time.

Mr. HARKIN. What was your job, again?

Mr. STRUHARIK. I was monitoring end use of American foreign aid. I am an American USAID development officer whose job is to be sure that the funds of foreign aid actually get to the intended recipient rather than someone else.

Mr. HARKIN. What was your job in the Army?

Mr. STRUHARIK. I was what was called a civil affairs officer, which basically was involved in civic action programs to assist refugees or populations affected by the war, once again commodity support or project support.

Mr. HARKIN. You said the Vietnamese were very interested in questioning you about your possible involvement with the CIA or DIA. Were you in fact an employee of the CIA?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No, never was, and am not now.

Mr. HARKIN. Were you asked by the CIA to do anything for them?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No, I never received requests of that type, no.

Mr. HARKIN. I have no further questions.

The CHAIRMAN. I think it might be proper at this time to have the staff director call the roll in case we do need to go into executive session. At this time I will ask the staff director to call the roll to determine if the members want to go into executive session if the need should arise.

Mr. MACDONALD. Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Aye.

Mr. MACDONALD. Mr. Moakley.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Here. The only reason I would vote to go into executive session would be to receive some testimony from Mr. Struharik that might be detrimental if heard in public session.

The CHAIRMAN. That is correct.

While we have a quorum, I thought it would be good to have the roll called. I prefer to stay in open session and get as much information as we can. If the witness has problems on this, I understand, but I thought this would be a proper time, while we still had our quorum.

Mr. MACDONALD. Mr. Ottinger.

Mr. OTTINGER. Aye.

Mr. MACDONALD. Mr. Harkin.

Mr. HARKIN. Aye.

Mr. MACDONALD. Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Aye.

Mr. MACDONALD. Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. Aye.

Mr. MACDONALD. Five "ayes" zero "nay," and one "present."

The CHAIRMAN. If we need to do this, the select committee has approved it by a majority response.

Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I regret I was delayed due to a prior commitment. I read Mr. Struharik's testimony. I have just one or two questions, Mr. Struharik.

In all your time in Southeast Asia, at any time did you receive any reports of any American prisoners that were still alive?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Do you mean during my imprisonment, or in the 6 years that I was there?

Mr. GILMAN. During the 6-year period.

Mr. STRUHARIK. Well, back in 1968, after the Tet offensive when there were Americans captured in Ban Me Thuot, we heard reports or rumors, if you will, that the Americans were being moved from here to here. These are people that have all been accounted for now, either released or died in captivity. Primarily, I am talking about Mike Benge, Hank Blood, and Betty Olson, who were captured in 1968. Other than that, I don't recall any substantive reports at all that there were Americans being held in this area or that area.

Mr. GILMAN. Subsequent to the release of our POW's, you have received no further record of any people being held, either civilians or military people, is that correct?

Mr. STRUHARIK. That is correct.

Mr. GILMAN. Were you stationed for a while in Vientiane or in the Laotian area?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No; I have never been there, other than flying through Vientiane after we were released. That is the only time I have ever been in that area.

Mr. GILMAN. Have you been involved in any direct inquiries with the Vietnamese at any time concerning any missing personnel?

Mr. STRUHARIK. There was the Joint Casualty Resolution Commission which was to operate—this was as a result of the cease-fire agreement after 1973—that was to operate through the two-power joint military commission. They did have a representative in Nha Trang. One of my functions as the province representative there was to pay attention to, and look for, any information that would relate to missing Americans. In our province there were about six or possibly eight sites where Americans were listed as missing.

During the course of these almost 2 years we tried to investigate these sites as much as possible with no results. Some of them were in PRG territory. In all of them it was pretty obvious it would be virtually impossible to determine exactly what had happened at the time and where, for example, a body might be. At one point I did investigate an air crash which turned out to be a crash of a fighter plane from which the pilot had, in fact, escaped.

That is the only relationship I had with the MIA.

Mr. GILMAN. Were you able to visit these six crash sites that you indicated you had information about? Were you able to visit all of those?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No; two of them it would have been possible to visit, but one was a fellow that had been driving an ammunition truck and the ammunition truck exploded. He was listed as MIA. This had happened something like 5 years previously. It would have taken a massive detailed search, which probably would not have found anything, anyhow. Another one was also along the road where there had been an ambush. That was in the late 1960's. After a medical evacuation of the personnel from the contact site, when everything got sorted out, there was one person missing. I could not go into that area myself but I did have my employees go in and talk to people from that area to determine what happened 5 years ago.

Mr. GILMAN. Do you remember any Americans being led through the jungle 5 years ago after a fight out here on this road?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Once again the information was negative. The other four sites were well out in the jungle.

Mr. GILMAN. When you said they were well out in the jungle, were they within friendly territory or within territory held by the PRG?

Mr. STRUHARIK. I suppose one of them would have been in PRG territory. The others would have been in no man's land. The great bulk of the territory in Vietnam has always happened to belong to whomever was walking through the area at the time. It is not "That mountain is PRG territory." If the PRG walks over the mountain, then it is their territory. If the GVN has a man walking over it, it is their territory. You cannot control vast hundreds of square miles, and I mean controlling it. Most of the territory is just no man's land.

Mr. GILMAN. Was it your discretion to determine whether to go in and examine the sites? Was it your sole discretion as the American officer in that province to make the determination as to whether the site should be investigated or not?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No. But the people who made the decision would listen to my opinion since I happen to live there and be familiar with the security.

Mr. GILMAN. Did you recommend that they not go in and investigate the sites in that province?

Mr. STRUHARIK. In four of them, yes. To go into the site to try to investigate it would have required a battalion-sized operation which we would have had to request the GVN to provide a military battalion to engage in a 2-week operation to go into this remote area to try to look for a body, or the remains, without any hard information that there was in fact a body there. If someone had come out and said, "I know where the body is," then we might have been able to try that. But to go out and walk around the jungle and take a chance of losing a lot more lives on no hard information was deemed inappropriate at that time.

Mr. GILMAN. Was there a fear, then, some safety concern that led to your decision in recommending not going in?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Yes; it was a tactical consideration. If you go out and stomp around in the jungle, you will attract attention to yourself and bring about a military activity, undoubtedly.

Mr. GILMAN. At any time did any report come to you, directly or indirectly, of any information concerning other crash sites or any prisoners?

Mr. STRUHARIK. No. The information that I had was based on the computer printouts which were furnished by the joint casualty resolution center in Bangkok which, as I understood it, assimilated all the information available concerning each individual MIA or body not recovered. They were put on a computer printout. That is where I got the information that there was a site here or a site there. The only other site that I had anything to do with that was not on that list was when we had a resettlement site established and near the resettlement site was a crashed aircraft. This was the one I mentioned we investigated, but determined the pilot had in fact gotten out of that crash.

Mr. GILMAN. Besides that, you had no other information, no reports, and no indications of any other crashes or information concerning prisoners in and around your province or adjoining areas, is that correct?

Mr. STRUHARIK. Yes, basically. I don't recall any right now, no.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to thank Mr. Gilman and also Mr. Ottinger for coming back this morning. I know they were traveling around the country on behalf of New York City.

Mr. Ottinger.

Mr. OTTINGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no questions.

The CHAIRMAN. If the witness would like to go into executive session to give us additional information that might be helpful to the select committee, this would be the proper time. Or, if you would like, sir, after the meeting is adjourned, to come up and talk to the members personally, we will not have to go into executive session.

Would you make a recommendation?

Mr. STRUHARIK. I don't think that I have any extensive information that we have not covered already that would necessitate an executive session.

The CHAIRMAN. If you would come up here right after we adjourn, we would appreciate it. I would like to remind the members of the select committee that we have an open session tomorrow in room H-227, beginning at 2:30 and also that our scheduled breakfast with Dr. Kissinger has been changed from Thursday morning at the State Department to Friday morning at 8 o'clock at the State Department to talk about this very serious situation that we have had gathering information.

We will meet with the Secretary of State then.

If there is no further business, the select committee now stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10 a.m., the select committee adjourned.]

MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1975

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING
PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA,
Washington, D.C.

The select committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room H-227, the Capitol, Hon. G. V. Montgomery (chairman of the select committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Montgomery, Gonzalez, Moakley, Schroeder, Ottinger, Harkin, Lloyd, McCloskey, Gilman, and Guyer.

Also present: J. Angus MacDonald, staff director; Jeanne Shirkey, administrative assistant; Dr. Henry J. Kenny, professional staff assistant; and Dr. Job Dittberner, professional staff assistant.

The CHAIRMAN. Before calling the first witness, who is Ms. Iris Powers, I would like to introduce a new staff assistant who has come aboard. We are very proud of our staff. We have been very fortunate. The new member of our staff is Job Dittberner. Mr. Dittberner grew up in Minnesota, gained his master's degree and doctorate degree at Columbia University. He taught for several years, and has been a free lance writer and editorial consultant. Mr. Dittberner comes to us with some facilities in speaking four languages. We are certainly glad to have him in the research area, and I would ask him to stand so the members can recognize him. Thank you.

We have two witnesses today. The second witness will be Jay Scarborough, we will hear from him after Ms. Powers. He was one of the American civilians captured last March in Ban Me Thuot and he will follow up on the testimony that was given by Paul Struharik only yesterday, so we appreciate Mr. Scarborough being here. He was in town and that is why we asked him to be here.

Our main witness today, and I would like to introduce her, in Iris R. Powers. Ms. Powers was active in the formation of the National League of Families, a group whose serious concern with the POW's and MIA's we are very familiar with on this select committee.

It was just over a month ago that we received testimony from the present directors of the National League. Ms. Powers was in fact the first national coordinator of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. She served as a board member of the league for 4 continuous years, from the time the league was incorporated in 1970 until June of 1974.

She has been chairperson of the league's repatriation, rehabilitation, and readjustment committee from 1972 to 1974 and served as chairman of the board of directors in 1973-74. She has served in several other positions connected with these matters.

As a glance at her biography¹ shows, Ms. Powers' son has been listed as missing in action in South Vietnam since April 2, 1969. I am very glad on behalf of the select committee, Ms. Powers, to welcome you to the committee for your testimony and you certainly can introduce anyone you would like to who is with you today.

STATEMENT OF IRIS R. POWERS, FORMER NATIONAL COORDINATOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA; ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. BOBBY VINSON AND MRS. WILMER GRUBB, FORMER NATIONAL COORDINATORS

Ms. POWERS. Mr. Chairman and members of the select committee, thank you for inviting us to appear before you today. I'd like to introduce to you Mrs. Bobby Vinson, national coordinator of the League from 1970 to 1971, and Mrs. Wilmer Grubb, national coordinator from 1971 to 1972. Col. Scott Albright—retired—the league's executive director from 1973 to 1974 would have been with us today had he not just taken on the responsibilities of a new civilian job in Florida; however, he sends word to you he is in full accord with this statement.

The select committee has been charged with bringing to a conclusion one of the most frustrating problems ever faced by our country: an accounting of our missing men, both servicemen and civilians, in Southeast Asia. We do not envy you your job. Your willingness to expose yourselves to the baffling and emotionally charged issues as they will unfold to you during the course of your hearings deserves the highest commendation. No one is more aware of the problems you will face than those of us sitting before you; we have traveled down the same road for many, many years.

In the process of carrying out your mandate, though, I believe you will also find yourselves called upon to render Solomon-like decisions on issues which are an outgrowth of the missing problem, not the least of which will be a definitive definition of "accounting for the missing." Your work is cut out for you.

Now a word about the genesis of the league. In its beginning, the league was composed of a group of wives banded together to bring public attention to the plight of their POW/MIA husbands. In those early years, from 1964 to 1969, it was the administration's policy that nothing be said about the POW/MIA's in the hope that by not making a public issue of it the Geneva Conventions regarding prisoners of war could be implemented. Primary next-of-kin were strictly forbidden to say anything, even to relatives, regarding the fate of their men. Military wives, living in close proximity to, or on bases, met covertly to discuss their predicament. Parents, on the other hand, unless military themselves, were completely out of touch and unaware that there were others in their communities who were going through the same agony they were.

Finally, at the behest of Mrs. James B. Stockdale, leader of the nucleus San Diego group of POW/MIA wives, the services, in their October 1969 monthly letter to PNOK's, inserted a paragraph giving

Sybil's name and a box number in San Diego to write to if we were interested in receiving her newsletter. For many primary next-of-kin parents like myself, this was the first—the very first—knowledge we had of another person in a like situation.

Shortly after that date some wives came to Washington to plead their cause to Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives. A bipartisan congressional group was formed, chaired by Senator Robert Dole, in "An Appeal for International Justice." The first mass meeting to bring our problem to the public was held at Constitution Hall on May 1, 1970, sponsored by this group. Families came to Washington from throughout the United States, and even some from Europe.

When the families met the next morning it was decided to formally incorporate and open a headquarters in Washington. An ad hoc committee was selected, and we were off and running to bring the attention of the American people, and the world, to the plight of our men.

Our first public event was an invitation to Members of Congress, the military, and other Government officials to an open house at our new home; space generously donated to us by the Reserve Officers Association in their beautiful building. So many came we needed "wall stretchers" to accommodate them all, and I think, Mr. Chairman, you were there, too.

Our next project was a memorable one: A joint meeting of Congress at which Members heard Col. Frank Borman relate his travels around the world seeking support for our cause from foreign governments.

To tell the full story of the league's phenomenal growth and accomplishments would fill volumes. Its impact upon the military, the Government, a large segment of our population and, indeed, the whole world was so dramatic that it is being considered for a sociological study by one of our most prestigious universities.

We were funded mostly by individual donations from Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Army personnel through their wing commanders, base commanders, chaplains, officer- and enlisted-wives clubs taking up collections and sending them on; and to a much lesser degree, interested civilians.

We were approached countless times to open our membership to other than families but the reaction of the league to this was decidedly negative, yet the widest possible interpretation of "family member" was written into our bylaws which encompassed cousins, second cousins, second cousins by marriage, babies, ad infinitum. All were given voting rights in the league. The more relatives the more votes. It is for this very reason that I feel that some of the actions taken by the league by vote of the membership do not truly reflect those people most vitally concerned: The primary next-of-kin.

I have been criticized in the past for using the expression that we were "carried around on a silk pillow." But that was my feeling then, and that's my feeling today. Our son's or husband's service tried its level best to accede to our every wish and give us help in solving knotty problems; inadequacy was only the product of lack of guidelines in dealing with those in our peculiar situation. The doors to Secretary Laird's office, Secretary Rogers' office, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Speaker of the House, Members of the House and Senate, and the

¹ See p. 139.

Military Adviser to the President were always open to the leadership of the league during our association with it. We were counseled and advised by a select group of professionals whose diversified positions and political interests enhanced the credibility of the league and of us, its spokesmen. In spite of continued pressures from numerous diverse influences the league maintained the singleminded purpose of securing its three initial objectives: (1) Improving the conditions of the POW's while in captivity; (2) securing a release of the prisoners; and (3) taking steps to obtain an accounting of our missing.

Beginning in March of 1971 and for 2 years thereafter the league's board met with Dr. Henry Kissinger, then the President's National Security Council Adviser and chief negotiator to end the war in Vietnam. Each of these meetings would last for at least an hour and a half and were held in the White House in an informal atmosphere which permitted complete participation by family members with no punches pulled. It was a highly emotionally charged atmosphere and we asked tough questions, sometimes intemperate and sometimes rude, but we were always treated gently, kindly, and compassionately. Some of our group felt we were being patronized and these meetings were held merely to placate us. I, for one, certainly do not. I always sat at Dr. Kissinger's immediate right at every one of these 10 or 11 meetings and I observed him closely: His jubilation when secret meetings with Le Duc Tho were going well; his anguish and despair when they were not. I am convinced that he felt, and does feel, a deep and personal involvement in us and our men, aside from his governmental responsibilities.

Think for a minute about these meetings. Throughout the history of our country there probably never before has been an instance in which a group of ordinary citizens have been admitted to the Executive Mansion on a continuing basis to sit down and discuss with one of the highest and busiest officials of the Government a problem that affected only a miniscule segment of our population—even though this population was a red-hot political issue.

I firmly believe that Dr. Kissinger did his best with what he had to work with. There has been sharp criticism and blame cast upon him recently, as architect of the Paris agreement, for the failure of North Vietnam to live up to article 8(b); that he should have negotiated ironclad safeguards for compliance. But, if you will recall, public pressure and Congress wiped out the few remaining means of force that might have been employed to "encourage" Hanoi to live up to those terms.

In addition, it should be brought out here that at the time of the proposed prisoner release and when the list of known prisoners was made public, it was decided by our board of directors—mirroring the feelings we felt of the membership could we have polled them—that the release of men known to be alive had to have a higher priority than information on our missing. We, as MIA next-of-kin, would not—could not—cause one live prisoner to be held in captivity 1 day longer than absolutely necessary. It was a heart-wrenching decision but one that was unselfishly made: MIA next-of-kin would have to gamble and rely upon the good faith of the North Vietnamese and her allies to give us an accounting as they had agreed to. We lost. Were I faced with the same choice again—even knowing what I do now 21½ years later—I'd make that same decision again.

Let me turn now to our present predicament and my feelings.

As an MIA next-of-kin who has been fortunate enough to live in this area and be privy not only to the inner workings of our Government through my association with the league from 1970 to 1974, but privy also to the considered judgment of many notables in the field of Asian affairs who were not immediately involved in the POW/MIA issue, and I have come to some conclusions.

To the question of:

1. Are there men still alive and being held captive in Southeast Asia? My answer would be, "Not likely." Having listened to Navy Comdr. George Coker, a returnee, and reading the transcript of a 4-hour-long presentation made to the league board in October of 1973 at my request as chairman, I would agree with his logic.

2. Do the North Vietnamese have knowledge of some of our missing and those whom we have proof positive that they were alive when on the ground? My answer would be, "Definitely." However, my strong feeling is that they will never give us that information until it suits their purpose, which could be years and years from now.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Powers, we will continue with your testimony until you have completed your prepared statement. It will then be necessary for the members to go vote. Upon returning, we will start on questions and comments because I am sure members would certainly like to ask some questions.

Ms. POWERS. Do you want me to finish quickly?

The CHAIRMAN. You may take your time.

Ms. POWERS. I will.

It's cruel; it's inhuman; it's deplorable, but to plagiarize Dr. Kissinger: We're not dealing with nature's noblemen. An Asian expert told us it was 11 years before the first French body came out of Indochina after the close of the Franco-Indochinese War.

3. Should status changes have been halted when they were? "No." And here I must be more lengthy in my answer.

In January 1971 I was appointed to chair one of the league's most important committees: Repatriation, rehabilitation, and readjustment. I shall not even summarize the hundreds of hours spent on this project before and after the men came home; it is documented extensively in my testimony before the full Committee of the House Armed Services on October 10, 1972. Suffice to say that a number of primary next-of-kin—mostly wives but many parents—were appalled at the actions of a few which have ground to a halt the logical sequence in the aftermath of a war: A change of status from "missing" to "presumed dead."

A few well-meaning—and in my opinion ill-advised—families, aided by some dutifully concerned citizens, both individuals and groups, have imposed their beliefs upon the private lives of many.

I've been condemned and vilified for seeming to care more about the families of our missing men than of the men themselves; but I believe that's the way our men would have wanted it, if there had to be a choice.

I bitterly resent having "concerned citizens" hysterically telling me that they care more about my son than I do—and this has happened. I wonder what motivates these people who have made our problem their crusade!

I mourn my son today as much as I did 6 years ago, but life must be for the living; the need to get on with the future of MIA wives, children, and parents is more—far more—important than anything else. You can't convince me that our missing men would have it any other way.

I have personal knowledge of many wives and children becoming estranged from in-laws because she, the wife, elected a status change. It's saddening for kids need grandparents, and grandparents need grandchildren.

The dedicated wives who spent years living as a social pariah—neither wife nor widow—who held onto hope until all hope dissipated, should not be forced, in effect, to sign her husband's death warrant by requesting a status change.

It's psychologically unsound and she runs the risk in times of turbulence in family matters of being accused, "You had my daddy declared dead. You killed my father." Children can be innocently cruel. Many courageous wives have "bitten the bullet" and asked for a status change but I'll wager all but a minute few have not done so without lasting guilt pangs. If the service makes that determination, it would relieve her of that traumatic decision and in almost all cases, would, I believe, be accepted.

To the woman who has waited 5, 7, 10 years for a husband who, barring a miracle yet to happen, will never return, requesting a status change is abhorrent—almost as abhorrent as waiting another 5, 7, or 10 years in the same dilemma; and it could happen. Time has a way of slipping away without being accounted for just as time may slip away without the missing being accounted for.

To me the present efforts of the league leadership in stopping status changes is wrong. It infringes upon the rights of other primary next-of-kin to put these tragic years behind them and start life anew.

You can tear yourself to pieces over what has happened in the past and you neglect yourself and your family today and tomorrow. The living family members need our love and our attention and should not have their lives clouded by our lamentations, our frustrations, and grief.

My recommendations, and the recommendations of others who think as I do, would be:

Try with every means at your disposal to open up new avenues of communications with the North Vietnamese and if you can arrive at new understandings with them, if you can find methods of reinstating the agreements in the Paris agreement that have been so flagrantly ignored, if you can develop procedures that will assure a proper accounting of even a portion of our missing men—that will allow U.S. search teams to comb the areas in which the men disappeared—you will have more than fulfilled your mission, and hundreds of MIA families will be forever in your debt.

Furthermore, if these hearings can develop realistic policies to be followed in future conflicts that, too, will serve a very useful purpose.

May we suggest also that the select committee urge the convening of a new international assembly to study and revise the present Geneva Conventions pertaining to prisoners of war. These international rules need enforcement provisions that will assure their effectiveness. As they now stand—and as they were ignored during the Vietnam conflict—they are largely meaningless.

And, lastly, we hope this committee, unless you should uncover hard evidence to the contrary, will strive to discourage unrealistic expectations on the part of the families of our missing men, and that you will state your findings in unequivocal terms. There should be no ifs, ands, or buts.

Thank you for listening. We will now be pleased to answer any questions you may have of us.

The CHAIRMAN. We will be right back.

[Brief recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The select committee will come to order.

I would like to thank the members for casting their vote and coming back so quickly. We probably will have some time before the next vote. I wonder if Mrs. Grubb and Mrs. Vinson would like to add anything?

Mrs. VINSON. I don't have a prepared statement but I would be delighted to respond to any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any other information you would like to submit for the record, Mrs. Grubb?

Ms. POWERS. Mr. Chairman, the only thing I have is Commander Coker's statement. It is an unedited transcript of 98 pages and I just don't see any need for all of it to go in the record but I would like each committee member to have a copy.

The CHAIRMAN. Could we maybe let the staff director look at it.

Ms. POWERS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. We will not put it officially in the record. Would that be your recommendation?

Ms. POWERS. It is voluminous, and it is unedited. It is 98 pages, sir. However, that would be entirely up to you.

The CHAIRMAN. What do you think?

Mr. MACDONALD. I would like to review it.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you want it in the record?

Mr. MACDONALD. Perhaps I should review it first.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. We will review it and if at a later date we want to put it in the record we will.¹

What other information do you have, Ms. Powers, that it is likely that these missing in action are not alive?

Ms. POWERS. Actually no concrete information, sir. It is—if I may use the expression—a gut feeling. I think when the committee members read Commander Coker's statement, his logic on the chances of the men being alive, starting from the time the plane is hit right on down through the landing, the infections, and so forth, the vast knowledge that he had of the prisoners in North Vietnam, the memory banks these POW's maintained; it just makes commonsense to me.

I would have to go along with his logic. Most of us who have read it agree.

Mrs. VINSON. I would like to address myself to that if I might.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mrs. VINSON. There is no definite knowledge that there is anyone alive. In talking to people after the so-called end of the Vietnam war, there has not been presented any evidence that I am aware of that has been substantiated there were any Caucasians alive or sighted anywhere in Southeast Asia.

I held out some hope for awhile, but it seems to be—

¹ See p. 103.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Vinson, do you have—

Mrs. VINSON. My husband is missing. I was involved with the league in its formation and about 2½ years thereafter.

The CHAIRMAN. You might talk just a little louder.

Mrs. VINSON. My husband was shot down over North Vietnam in April of 1968. When the prisoners of war came home I still held out some hope that there would be some men held because to me that seemed sort of reasonable; that the North Vietnamese would hold some people back because they didn't have a great deal of reason to trust us. It has been 2 years since the end of the war—or longer than that, 2½—and they have not in any way come up with the fact that they held anybody to try to use them to bargain with. There are many things you have to accept in life from logic.

There are so many things you have no proof of. There are many people over there who were declared killed in action that there was no proof they were dead. They were shot down over an area and it was assumed they would be dead. Those families had to accept that fact. It seems to me that is sort of the position we are put in.

It is a very, very difficult position, but for myself—and I cannot speak for other people—but for myself and for my children, I held out hope to my children for 6 years that their father was alive. It seemed to me that it was psychologically unsound to continue to hold out that hope to them. The children are now 21, 19, 17, and 11, so they are perfectly capable of understanding, and they share my belief.

The CHAIRMAN. This will be my last question and then I will give other members an opportunity.

Ms. POWERS, you feel that the status change of the missing in action should be done by the Defense Department and the status change should be made from missing in action?

Ms. POWERS. Definitely, sir, definitely.

The CHAIRMAN. Presumed dead or what other titles?

Ms. POWERS. Yes, sir. It has been too long now.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Grubb?

Mrs. GRUBB. I agree.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Powers, when you express the thought that it is not very likely that there are any prisoners or captives alive, do you include Laos?

Ms. POWERS. Yes, sir.

Mr. GONZALEZ. And Cambodia?

Ms. POWERS. Southeast Asia; yes, sir.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Yesterday morning an AID official, recently released from North Vietnam testified before this committee. We had every reason to believe he was being held captive, but we wouldn't list him as a prisoner.

In effect, that is the way he and the missionaries with him were treated. They were held as prisoners and treated as such, as if they had been prisoners of war.

So what you are really saying is that in the majority of instances you do not feel that it is likely there would be prisoners?

Ms. POWERS. Vast majority, sir, vast majority.

Mr. GONZALEZ. And you feel that the Defense Department in its findings and decisions has not been precipitous or premature in any one case?

Ms. POWERS. No, sir, I do not.

The CHAIRMAN. Would the gentleman yield at that point?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Certainly, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I have, in effect, asked the Defense Department to hold in abeyance and not change the classification of the missing in action until this committee had had the opportunity to make a full report or unless the next of kin would ask that the case be reviewed. I wanted you to understand, Ms. Powers, that I have orally made this request as chairman, in order to give the select committee a chance to work its will, and the select committee has less than a year to operate, so I wanted you to know that, that I had requested that status change not be made unless the next of kin came in and asked that a review be made and until this committee had a chance to write its final report.

Mr. Gonzalez?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Just one followup question.

I just ask you this for perhaps a little clarification in point 2 and point 1.

In point 1 you say, "Not likely." Point 2 you feel the North Vietnamese have some knowledge of those missing.

Ms. POWERS. You bet. I am sure they do.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Therefore, you do feel there are some alive.

Ms. POWERS. No; I think you misinterpret me, sir. I think that they have information that they could give us on those men who died in captivity, or crashed and died upon landing, and this sort of thing; this information that they have, sir. Excuse me. Perhaps I didn't make it clear.

Mr. GONZALEZ. No. Just from reading point 2 there seemed to be some apparent contradiction. I felt I knew what you meant but I wanted the record to show.

Ms. POWERS. Thank you.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much. We hope to have some of the questions surrounding the Paris agreements answered, but we certainly want to thank you for taking your time to be here and for the other help you have given this committee. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. VINSON. I think you were referring to the captured missionaries. May I make one statement.

At least in my interpretation of what we are saying, I am specifically talking about people who were either shot down, killed, captured, or whatever, before the end of the war, not what happened after North Vietnam's takeover of South Vietnam, and who could have been killed or captured during that period of time.

Mr. GONZALEZ. I understand.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Moakley.

Mr. MOAKLEY. I would like to thank you, Ms. Powers and these two ladies with you, for coming here, and I don't question your sincerity, but do I gather you feel that Mr. Kissinger has done all in his power to settle this situation?

Ms. POWERS. I think he has done all he can, sir. I don't know at what length he has gone in the last year or so, but I feel that during the time of the negotiations he did all that he could. I have not really paid much attention to this, sir, since July of 1974.

Mr. MOAKLEY. You know we have an embargo against Vietnam right now. People can't even go over there under a U.S. passport or send gifts. Passports are invalid without special permission from the State Department and I just don't think that is helping resolve this situation. Do you?

Mrs. GRUBB. It is not relevant to our problem at all. I believe if you approached the State Department with a special mission that they would be very understanding. They have been in the past and I really think they would be now.

Mr. MOAKLEY. I think you will find some disagreement with some of the members here.

Mrs. VINSON. You are stating that even if you can get a visa you can't get in.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Precisely. I am saying that the State Department has terminated all passports unless by special permission.

Mrs. VINSON. I think you are talking about onsite inspection; but even when you are talking about onsite inspection, the length of time it has been, and the terrain, I seriously doubt you would find somebody.

Mr. MOAKLEY. I am not getting into the Vietnam thing at all.

Mrs. VINSON. People have been there; have been going there for a number of years attempting to talk to the leaders of North Vietnam and the Vietcong, and it hasn't accomplished anything.

Mr. MOAKLEY. We have attempted to have Mr. Kissinger before the select committee and we are finally having him, Mr. Chairman, Friday.

The CHAIRMAN. We are going down to the State Department for breakfast.

Mr. MOAKLEY. As I say, I admire what you stand for; but I just don't feel that Mr. Kissinger has done everything possible and I think that the lone vote excluding Vietnam from the United Nations is another thing that probably makes that job much more difficult, and I just think that much has to be done.

I agree with the chairman. I think as to the status situation as far as the select committee is concerned, because we are very short-lived, we should have a moratorium on it and get on our business so that we can get as much work done in the short period of time we have.

Ms. POWERS. Mr. Moakley, I can agree if a decision will be made and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I am all for that.

Mrs. VINSON. I just think we all agree that there probably should be a moratorium for this year that you are carrying on the investigation.

Mr. MOAKLEY. That is all, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mrs. Schroeder?

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I appreciate your coming and testifying. I am glad to hear what you say on the moratorium. I think that is part of what we are attempting to do. If we can make some breakthroughs with the help of the State Department, and there really is no way the select committee can do it without the help of the State Department—I think our protest has been maybe we haven't had the help we would like to have—we will make some breakthroughs and get over there and really get some information.

I think we are at a point now where the Vietnamese really don't have any reason to withhold this from us any longer. We are no longer negotiating, so if there is some way we can talk to them and find out, then maybe we will be able to settle the issue once and for all. I think

it is very difficult on families to have the whole matter off-again/on-again. I understand that.

Ms. POWERS. We wish you well. Believe me, we wish you well.

The CHAIRMAN. Would the gentlelady yield there?

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any idea how many families of the over 800 who have been classified as missing in action want the status changed eventually or what is the feeling that you might have?

Ms. POWERS. I will speak first, and then I would like Evie and Joan to speak. Of those with whom I have talked, and I can only go on that; recently it hasn't been that many. There is a wife right here in Virginia who served on my triple-R committee that says, "I will never make the change, but, my God, I wish they would make it for me."

Of the wives that I have talked to throughout the United States, there are a number that want the service to make the determination, not place the onus upon them. I won't make it for my son. When the Army makes it I will accept it. Those with whom I have talked feel the same way.

I don't talk about it with the others because we'll usually end up in a battle. Evie, what is your feeling?

Mrs. GRUBB. I agree with that. I am in a totally different status. My husband's body was returned and he is buried, and I will tell you that the difference between the time that I did not know where he was, or that his body might not be returned, and after the funeral has been just like night and day. It has been such a relief.

The CHAIRMAN. A relief for you?

Mrs. GRUBB. I know if his body had not been returned I would have waited indefinitely rather than ask for status change.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Grubb, I might be confused with someone else. Was your husband in captivity?

Mrs. GRUBB. Yes, he was.

The CHAIRMAN. He was alive and they had pictures of him?

Mrs. GRUBB. That is right and a petition was submitted, a single signature petition in behalf of all the men to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, stating all the facts that were known about my husband, and the fact that he was in captivity, and yet no information came out about him from the North Vietnamese for over 5 years. For 5 years I believed he was alive. Photographs of him given to the world press showed him unharmed and walking; yet years later I learned he died 9 days after capture.

The CHAIRMAN. When was the body returned?

Mrs. GRUBB. His body was returned in March of 1974. He was buried in Arlington in April.

The CHAIRMAN. 1974. That is when we received the 20—

Mrs. GRUBB. That is right, 23 bodies. My husband's was one of them.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mrs. Schroeder, are you through?

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Guyer.

Mr. GUYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to apologize. A couple of us are on the International Relations Committee and they were trying to get a quorum. Mr. Colby

is in executive session, so we ran over and just checked in. Mr. Gilman is still there.

We are enormously grateful to you for coming, and if ever there was a group of people who had courage, I think you are it in this country. I think it would be very presumptuous of us to take a position for you, and irrespective of the vote that was taken at Omaha, or whether it is an individual, I like to respect the people because they are standing there and we aren't.

Until we walk in your shoes we don't know how you feel. I have only been in Congress 3 years now, less, but nothing has ever been done but letter writing, and petition sending, and resolution exchanges, and really it was pretty frustrating.

Mrs. Paul is here from my State, standing back here, and we work with her. We have been at meetings—radio, television. They have had excellent presentations. It has been a total heartache, and it is my hope and prayer that this select committee, certainly a bipartisan American committee, can do what hasn't been done before because no one group of people ever made it their single dedication.

You mentioned the United Nations. We are losing a lot of credibility in the United Nations. I do not know how much they deliver. They talk a lot about human rights but when they get down to deliver the ball they don't deliver. Congress has been a little bit the same way.

I have heard a lot of fellows say they are all dead, and why should you carry on and let the people bleed? I think there is more to it than that. As you said here in your own experience, I think when we know there are 1,000 crash sites that have not been seen or visited, it behooves us or somebody—it doesn't have to be us—to get into some of these camps and get some information and put these people to the fire a little bit, or however we can, if we want to do it through conciliation or delegation—fine.

We are almost convinced now they won't talk unless there is more than one subject, but I say if it takes four subjects let us do it.

I didn't realize the chairman would call so many meetings. This fellow would meet 7 days a week if we could find enough reason. Somebody has said we only have a year to work as a committee, and he has brought in everybody who has had a suggestion to this select committee.

I think what we want from you ladies is just to tell us what you think we ought to do, and how we ought to go about it.

Mrs. GRUBB. Our strongest suggestion was for the committee to make a definition of the problem, because until you find what the problem is you can't find a solution.

We ask only that your definition be reasonable, be realistic, be responsible.

Mr. GUYER. Would you say that most of the relatives would like to have the bodies back home if they knew for sure they were deceased and could be returned?

It isn't quite as simple as it might sound, I know. If properly buried, some would feel comforted as long as they knew where they were, or knew their status.

What is the general feeling among the families? Would they like to have the bodies back home?

Mrs. GRUBB. There is tremendous comfort that comes from having a man back on his own soil. I think you should do everything possible to obtain that, but I don't think that we should delay resolving the major problems that you see here until you get the bodies home.

Mr. GUYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ottinger.

Mr. OTTINGER. I have no questions, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Harkin.

Mr. HARKIN. I have nothing other than to express my appreciation along with the other members for your being here and for what you have done in the past. I have perhaps one short question, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. OK.

Mr. HARKIN. Do you perceive that there are any other reasons, other than those that you may have enunciated already, as to why others are opposing status change?

Ms. POWERS. Well, sir, I have heard it said, and I sometimes wonder, whether finances may come into it. That seems a cruel thing to say, but I have to say it.

Mr. HARKIN. Will you explain that for me? I don't understand it.

Ms. POWERS. As you well know, our husbands' and sons' pay and allowances are going on. We are in a comfortable position financially. Some may not be willing to change that or would delay the change. I know that sounds terrible, but one must be realistic.

We have talked about it among ourselves. In fact Joan and I were sitting here just a few minutes ago discussing the very same thing, were we not?

Mrs. VINSON. Yes.

Ms. POWERS. Speak for yourself, Joan.

Mrs. VINSON. I don't particularly care to address myself to that.

There were a couple of things that you had mentioned, Mr. Guyer, onsite inspection. There, again, to be logical, how will that ever come about? Perhaps the North Vietnamese will say, "All right, come on in," but I cannot imagine us being allowed to go into a Communist country for onsite inspection.

We wouldn't allow them here. Also, if they ever asked us to account for their missing, or for their dead, we could not do it.

Mr. GUYER. But there is a little difference. They are in the country. They are dead and not in our country.

Mrs. VINSON. That is true, but they were in South Vietnam.

Mr. GUYER. Your husband is missing?

Mrs. VINSON. Yes.

Mr. GUYER. I didn't hear that at the beginning. Pardon me.

Mrs. VINSON. As far as why some people would not want to change, I think some people sincerely believe that there are some men over there, genuinely believe it. I am not saying that there aren't. Conceivably, maybe, there could be. Anything is possible. There are miracles.

I am speaking for myself. I personally do not believe that my husband is alive. I really feel very sorry for anybody who honestly thinks that her husband or son is alive. That is pure hell, because I know for 6 years I still had the hope that my husband was alive. I think having accepted the fact that he is dead also brings you some peace.

Mr. GUYER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HARKIN. Sure.

Mr. GUYER. I think one of the cruelest things said, though, was the criticism that you just mentioned, Iris, that this was the reason why some next of kin didn't want the status change. I think that is cruel and largely untrue.

Ms. POWERS. I do, too, in many cases.

Mr. GUYER. I think the total amount of funds that come in for this purpose is under \$10 million a year. I think I am in the ballpark, Mr. Chairman. It is minimal.

Mr. GONZALEZ. You mean the whole total?

Mr. GUYER. That is right, for those who are kept on benefits, and that isn't even the price of one airplane.

Ms. POWERS. That is right.

Mr. GONZALEZ. I think that is the cruelest thing anybody can say.

Ms. POWERS. I do, too, sir. It seems cruel, but you would be amazed how much of it is being said. You would be amazed.

Mr. HARKIN. I would agree with you and I would agree with my colleague that it is cruel. However, you don't like to close the door on any possibilities that might exist. Having been to Laos and Vietnam myself, knowing what that terrain is like, I understand it is cruel without that, but it is not beyond a reasonable doubt.

Being an attorney I also use those terms. It is not beyond a reasonable doubt that there may possibly be men alive or being held by tribes in the mountains of Laos or any other place over there. It is not beyond a reasonable doubt.

Ms. POWERS. Perhaps.

Mr. HARKIN. Therefore, I hate to close any doors until we as a committee have examined all possible avenues.

Ms. POWERS. Yes.

Mrs. GRUBB. There is a conflict in your ideas. I think that you believe that once the presumptive finding of death is made that the country is going to give up on that man. But the Government has already promised that they will continue to search. If they come across a prisoner they sure aren't going to kill him to keep their statistics correct.

Mr. GUYER. I read the testimony given by the Defense Department and State Department, and I remember very vividly in one of the statements given that they discovered an Italian war prisoner alive in Siberia left over from World War II. That is a matter of record. You can read it.

If that is true, it is possible some are being held and, besides, most of them taken were airmen who are technical people.

The CHAIRMAN. If we have no more questions, I would also like to thank the three ladies for being here today and certainly for your honest and straightforward testimony. It is necessary for us to go vote again after which we will hear from Mr. Jay Scarborough.

He is one of the nine Americans and might add to what our witness said yesterday. We will talk about our trip to the Far East or Paris in executive session after we hear from Mr. Scarborough.

We thank the witnesses for coming.

Ms. POWERS. Thank you, gentlemen.

Mrs. VINSON. Thank you.

Mrs. GRUBB. Thank you.

[Brief recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The select committee will come to order. Maybe we can finish up. I will not make any prediction as to the next vote.

We are glad to have the ranking Member from the Republican side, Mr. McCloskey, who just flew in from England and Paris.

Our next witness is Mr. Jay Scarborough, who, along with Mr. Paul Struharik, whose testimony we heard yesterday, was held captive in South and North Vietnam since this past March.

Mr. Scarborough majored in Asian studies at Cornell University. He is a Fulbright lecturer, went to Vietnam in 1965 on a Ford Foundation grant, and was working with the ethnic Vietnamese groups. He was engaged in those studies at the time he was captured and released on October 30, at the same time as the other American civilians.

Mr. Scarborough, will you come up. We appreciate your being here today. We did receive a full statement from Mr. Struharik. You have read his testimony. Can you add, briefly, to what he had to say?

STATEMENT OF JAY SCARBOROUGH, FORD FOUNDATION SCHOLAR

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Yes; I did read Mr. Struharik's statement. I concur with it.

I want to emphasize a few things: First of all, I offer an expression of thanks to the American people for their support during the war and their desire for better relations with the U.S. Government. This was expressed to us by persons at all levels.

The CHAIRMAN. You mean in North Vietnam?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Yes; and I would also like to emphasize the good treatment we received at all times.

The CHAIRMAN. I got the impression from Mr. Struharik that it was mental pressure more than physical pressure, sometimes even mental torture. Did you have any experience in that regard?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. I think Mr. Struharik and Mr. Lewis, both civilian personnel, were interviewed more extensively. My own interrogations were very perfunctory and caused no mental stress whatsoever. The mental stress was the uncertainty of our release.

The CHAIRMAN. I want you to know the American people were vitally concerned, also. This committee did have a small part in this area in pointing out to the Nation that there were some Americans still in Vietnam, after the fall in March of 1975.

Do you have any fear of what could happen to the American civilians still in the Saigon area who would like to come out?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. The only thing I have heard about that is what I have heard since being released. I am certain they are not being mistreated. That is based on my own experience.

The CHAIRMAN. There was no brutality at all? In fact you found they treated you very fairly while you were in effect in prison?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Under the circumstances of our detention, 2½ months of which were spent in the jungle, our treatment was very good. Also, that of the officers of the Vietnamese 23d Division was also very good, no brutality at anytime.

The CHAIRMAN. Did you see or hear of any American military personnel who might be alive in the different camps you went to, prison camps such as Son Tay?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. The North Vietnamese always told us they had released all living prisoners in 1973. One of our group is Mrs. Betty

Mitchell whose husband has been missing since 1962. It would be interesting for you to talk to her. She never let up on the subject of her husband when she was interrogated, and they were most emphatic that if her husband were living, he would have been released.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Can you explain why you would have been taken all the way to Hanoi? Saigon was closer.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. We were told the facilities were better in the North. I don't know why we were taken to Hanoi, other than it was clear they were in charge of the whole show.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Then you were captives?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. We were not free.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. McCloskey.

Mr. MCCLOSKEY. I will pass and defer to Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you.

How long were you in Vietnam altogether?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Almost 7 years.

Mr. GILMAN. Had you visited any of the prisoner camps outside the place you were captured?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. No. I was not familiar with the highlands at all.

Mr. GILMAN. While you were in Vietnam did you receive information as to captives other than the POW's who were returned in the 1970's, whether they be civilian, military personnel, journalists, or missionaries? Did you receive any reports as to any captives?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. No; not any living captives. All we heard about the MIA's was what we heard on Radio Hanoi. Radio Hanoi was saying they were ready to discuss the matter with the United States. They felt the American Government was being uncooperative about it, that they were prepared to discuss it, but the reason it was not being discussed was the fault of the Americans. There was a report about 2 or 3 years ago by Premier Pham Van Dong which stated this.

Mr. GILMAN. How long were you held captive?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. About 7½ months.

Mr. GILMAN. In what capacity were you while in Vietnam?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. I was a teacher for 5 years. I recently went there to photograph Cham manuscripts under the Ford Foundation grant.

Mr. GILMAN. At any time did you come upon information as to those missing in Vietnam?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. I lived in Pham Rang Province, and I don't believe there were any Americans ever taken in Pham Rang. I never heard anything as to that. It is on the coast in about the middle of South Vietnam.

Mr. GILMAN. Did any of the Vietnamese discuss the MIA question with you during your captivity?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. The North Vietnamese officially did. The substance of their comments was if anyone were alive, they would have been released. They also commented it was very possible that persons reported alive had been killed by bomb strikes, for example, in the Kantum area where the bombing was very heavy in 1972.

The CHAIRMAN. Because of time I won't call on each individual member, but I would say we have another 5 minutes to ask Mr. Scarborough questions.

Mr. Ottinger?

Mr. OTTINGER. Based on your experience in Vietnam and with the Vietnamese, do you have any advice for us as to the best way in which we might proceed to obtain from the Vietnamese the answers to the remaining questions about missing persons in Southeast Asia?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. The one thing I think that everyone should realize is that they are a very proud people. They told us, for example, that they didn't dare release us before the U.N. vote because they didn't want our release looked upon as an attempt to influence the U.S. vote in this matter. I think that is a very interesting outlook as to their psychology.

I am personally in favor of dropping all mail and trade restrictions to North Vietnam. They always said they had no quarrel with the United States; and they look upon our actions since May as evidence of continued hostility.

Mr. OTTINGER. Your feeling is if we make some substantial gesture in the nature of resuming trade, that we would probably get a favorable response from the Vietnamese on the MIA question?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. In conversations I had with them they would say the Paris Peace Treaty that was adopted, that article 21 would have to be implemented too. I said I did not know if it would be under that name.

Mr. OTTINGER. This, of course, is our prime mission, to do what we can to resolve these questions. Some of the families are here today, and we don't have firm answers at all as to what happened to their sons, husbands, or other relatives. Any guidance you can give use would be appreciated.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. I really don't know what effect individual efforts do. It was our position we were released as a unilateral action by the Vietnamese.

Mr. OTTINGER. For what purpose?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. A gesture to the U.S. Government. I can't think of any other reason, except possibly just to get rid of us. I don't know, you might know, but I don't know if they ever tried to use us as hostages to get anything.

The CHAIRMAN. Will the gentleman yield?

In your talks with the Vietnamese, was it your feeling they were telling the truth when they said there was no more U.S. military personnel alive and they had given them all back in March of 1973?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. As a matter of logic, I can't see them releasing any living Americans now, 2 years later, after they have said they don't have any. But Betty Mitchell is the one to talk to about this.

The CHAIRMAN. Any further questions? Thank you very much.

Mr. GONZALEZ. I have just one.

In speaking with the North Vietnamese, did you speak to them in their language?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Yes; at all times.

The CHAIRMAN. The select committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4 p.m. the select committee was adjourned.]

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1975

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING
PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA,
Washington, D.C.

The select committee met at 3:30 p.m. in room H-227, the Capitol, Hon. Gillespie V. Montgomery, chairman of the select committee, presiding.

Present: Representatives Montgomery, Gonzalez, Ottinger, Harkin, McCloskey, Gilman, and Guyer.

Staff members present: J. Angus MacDonald, staff director; Jeanne Shirkey, administrative assistant; Dr. Henry Kenny, professional staff assistant; and Dr. Job L. Dittberner, professional staff assistant.

The CHAIRMAN. The meeting will come to order.

After we have heard the testimony of General Kingston, I hope that the select committee will stay for an informal meeting. We have some information about our Paris trip, and I would like the members to remain. We have heard from the North and South Vietnam Government about this proposed meeting.

We are very fortunate today to have as our witness Maj. Gen. Robert C. Kingston. Major General Kingston was the first commander of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center from the time it was formed in early 1973 until January of 1974. Major General Kingston is at present commander of the Army's John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance, at Fort Bragg. He has been asked to give us a briefing today on the JCRC,¹ its history, and its methods.

We are pleased to have you, General Kingston. It is my feeling that some of the members of the select committee will visit the Joint Casualty Resolution Center during this Thanksgiving recess. It is in limbo right now as to what we can do, but some of the members will go to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Thailand at some time in the future. We are glad to have you as a witness today. You may proceed as you would like.

STATEMENT OF MAJ. GEN. ROBERT C. KINGSTON, U.S. ARMY

General KINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, members of the select committee, it is a particular pleasure for me to be here because you do not get involved in something like the Joint Casualty Resolution Center just because it is an assignment. When you walk away from it, you remain emotionally involved.

¹ See map of Cambodia, p. IV.

I would like to point out, as the chairman has said, that my presentation today will present only the time that I was the commander, and that was from January of 1973 until January 1974. I am prepared to answer additional questions on a personal, but not professional, basis after that.

The JCRC was formed as a joint task force, under command of the CINCPAC, under operational control of U.S. Support Activities Group at Nakhon Phanom Royal Air Force Base, Thailand, activated in Saigon 23 January.

The command relationship established by JCS gave Admiral Gayler command and operational control to General Voght in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand.

The mission of the JCRC is to assist in resolving the status of those U.S. personnel missing in action (MIA), and those personnel declared dead whose bodies were not recovered (BNR), through the provision of information/coordination and/or conduct of operations to locate and investigate crash and grave sites and recover and identify remains throughout Indochina.

This is the mission as it was when it was first formed. Of course, BNR is "body not recovered." These are the people that have been declared dead by the Secretaries of the services. Their remains have not been located.

Southeast Asia, for the purposes of the JCRC, meant North and South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, as those are the only four areas in which we had missing in action.

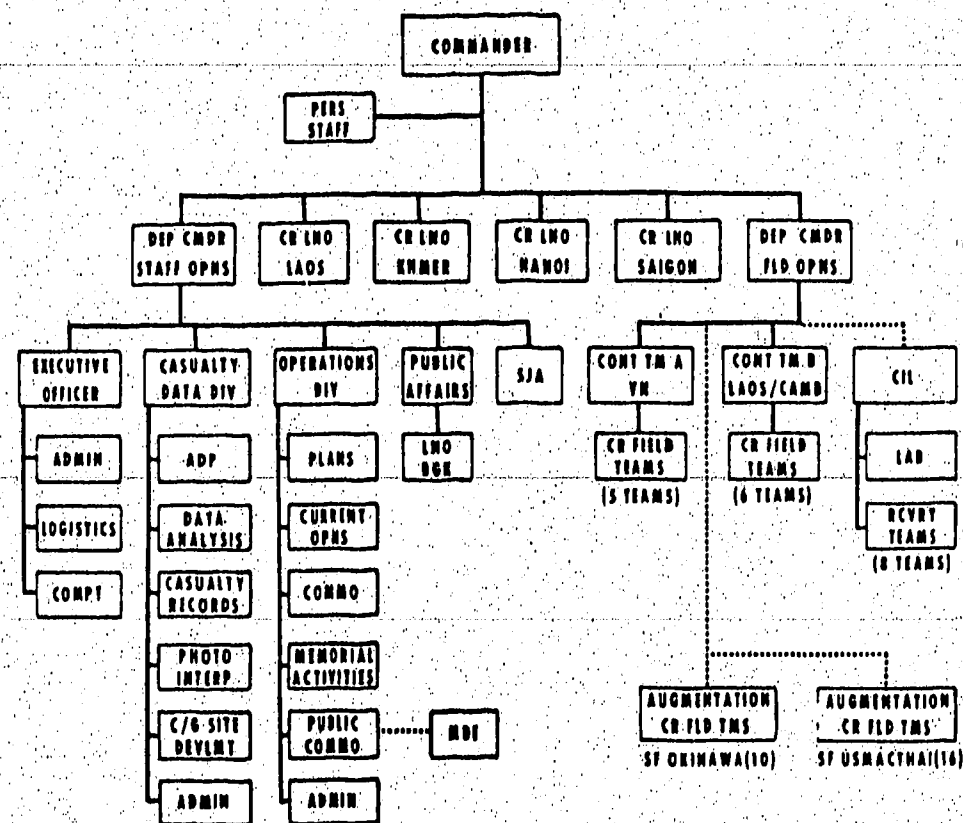
These are certain assumptions that we had to assume in order to establish the organization. We assumed that the Paris accords would be honored by all parties and that cooperation would be forthcoming as the terms of their agreement stated.

Again, activities throughout the area would be such that the teams were allowed to get in.

Along with the assumptions to physically operate it, I needed the following authorities: Overflight of our aircraft, JCRC aircraft, aircraft of all territories involved, right of entry for the teams, and public information programs. I felt this was very important, particularly in areas like Laos where approximately 85 to 90 percent of the population were illiterate.

We had to have a mass information program to let the population know that the United States was looking for their missing in action, craft sites, and grave sites.

We had direct coordination with the Embassies and local government. The ICC was still in being when we were there. We operated in coordination with them in local procurement, not only for things but also for people to assist us.



This is the organization, myself as the commander. I had an aide and a secretary; I had two deputy commanders, an Air Force colonel for my staff and an Army colonel for field operations. I was authorized an Army colonel in Vientiane as liaison officer, and a Navy captain in Phnom Penh. We never put one there because the fighting had not stopped there, and the Ambassador decided he did not want a liaison officer at that time.

I was authorized a Marine full colonel aviator for Hanoi. He was accredited to and worked with the Air Force liaison officer in Saigon. They were both accredited for the joint military team and on a frequent basis talked with the other members of the Four Party Team, the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong.

My executive officer took care of the normal administrative duties. Casualty Data Division assembled all the information we had on the missing in action, on the status, and activities surrounding their missing status, whether it was ground battles or Air Force or sea crashes.

I had a casualty officer from each of the services to maintain casualty records. We did not produce any information; we got the information and our records directly from the Casualty Division of the services.

We used various records particularly the health and dental records, in our identification.

Operations Division planned our activities. I had my own flight of three aircraft. I had memorial service activities which coordinated with my central identification laboratories that had been organized from the mortuary in Saigon and moved to Samae San.

I had my public communications office, the element in which I had local ethnics from all the countries or had access to them, including the different dialects throughout Southeast Asia.

I acted as the public affairs officer at NKP. At Ambassador Unger's request, we put one in Bangkok to answer the queries of people coming into the country there rather than coming to Nahkon Phanom.

I had an Army SJA trained in international law. My field teams were set up so I would have 11 teams initially at Nahkon Phanom broken down by country areas. We were only allowed to operate in South Vietnam in those areas controlled by the South Vietnamese Government. We did not operate in North Vietnam, nor Cambodia, nor Laos.

I had standby teams for augmentation; 10 in Okinawa from the Special Forces Group, and I had teams coming from the Special Forces of Thailand. Both of these organizations are now not in existence.

During the time frame 1973, immediately after the Americans left South Vietnam and a year after that, there were approximately 1,300 not recovered, over 1,100 crashes in Southeast Asia.

These are the approximate figures, the exact figures your members of the committee will be able to get once you get to the JCRC in Samae San.

In order to determine how we would go about looking and searching these grounds for the actual crash and grave sites, we reconstituted all the major land and air battles fought, involving U.S. forces throughout Southeast Asia. We found that of the 370 air crashes in which we had missing in action in North Vietnam, the majority were located in a few general areas.

Crash sites were generally in the vicinity of Haiphong, Hanoi, and the rock pile leading into the head of the Ho Chi Minh Trail; in Laos, the Bethalmy Pass leading into Rock Five going into the Plains of Jars; the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos; the Kontum area up west of Pleiku in the North Highlands around An Loc-Loc Ninh; and the area in Cambodia that we went in in the 1970's.

The majority of the 20 crashes in Cambodia were in a small area.

The CHAIRMAN. Were those missing in action or just crashes?

General KINGSTON. These are crashes.

The CHAIRMAN. Were these recoverable?

General KINGSTON. In Laos we had a total of 357 missing in action, 219 bodies not recovered which were still declared dead, but their remains have not been recovered.

[Slide.] These are crash sites here and 180 at sea. This shows the different types of aircraft that we had to go after and the number of each type missing; and to allow us to tackle this problem, I had craft site investigators from the Air Force, Navy, and Army that could identify the different modular parts to the aircraft.

CR FIELD TEAM

	O-3	31542	TEAM LEADER
	E-5	05B4S	RADIO MAN
	E-6	91B4S	MEDIC
	E-5/7	96C20	INTERROGATOR
	E-6/7	11B4S	TEAM MEMBER

POSSIBLY AUGMENTED BY:

	O3	CRASH INVESTIGATOR
	OFF/NCO/CIV	AREA SPECIALIST
	E-6	EOD/DEMOLITIONS SPECIALIST
	(5) O-3+4 E-5s	GRO TEAM

This is a typical five-man team. We went in unarmed, with the international arm markings, indicating we were under the auspices of a joint military team. The team leaders or captains had a radioman, a medic, general duty soldier, and an interviewer that spoke the language or the dialect in the area in which we were to operate. He was an American soldier under my command.

We were augmented under my command by crash investigators and area specialists who came from within the country in which we were to operate. When we operated in South Vietnam, these were in many cases indigenous working for the counsel general in the area we were working in.

Before we went to the grave or crash site, the first ones on the ground were the explosive disposal people to make sure it was not booby trapped as they have a habit of doing; and also a lot of the aircraft went in with ordnance still on it. I did not want my people being hurt or blown up by explosives.

My memorial activity personnel were from the Central Identification Laboratory; Army personnel that are specifically trained in searching for crash and grave sites. Once these people got on the ground, they took charge and conducted the physical search.

Before going in on an operation, and the ones that we did operate on in South Vietnam, the Embassies gave approval to come in and OK'ed working with the Government. They gave the OK to come in and go after a specific crash or grave site.

We did the whole planning sequence throughout the execution and the after-action report. This was a way in which we could insure that the maximum effort and everything required went in the country with the team and that the prior planning was accomplished.

We had site folders for every crash and grave site that we had the information from. Again, we did not produce any information; we went to the in-country personnel in the case of South Vietnam; and we went to the individual services for the records and information pertaining to the missing-in-action personnel.

In setting up the organization, we established there were three ways that we would eventually operate. In the case where the indigenous of a country found a crash, or found a grave site, or found remains, we would fly in a team from the central identification laboratory, pick up the remains, and fly them back to Samae San, south of Bangkok for identification.

Another method would be to send in a recovery team, make a search, find a crash or grave site, and bring in the memorial service people. They would conduct a search; the remainder of the team would go back to Nakhon Phanom. The remains would be flown to Samae San for the identification laboratory.

The way I found most economical, was to move into an airfield in the vicinity of the majority of crash and grave sites and operate multiple teams simultaneously out of that base until we worked the sites in that area. We brought back the remains and flew them to the central identification laboratory.

In the year I was there, we used all three different techniques.

The public communications media had to get the message from the JCRC through the host countries and identify who in the country could best suit our purposes to get the information out of the people.

Again, we were dealing with all types of leaders—religious, military, political, tribal, ethnical, the whole works. Face to face, we felt because of the lack of understanding and because of the great illiteracy in some of the areas, we wanted people on the ground to get this out to their people; and then we could get the feedback to the different agencies within the country and to both host country and U.S. officials and back to us so we could send a team in to operate.

I will show you examples of information flyers we distributed. This is South Vietnamese with the writing, and the crash and grave sites that we were after.

A great percentage of the material was put out with no writing, showing the question mark, "What happened to the man?" because of the illiteracy of the people we were dealing with. We did have environmental hazards. We were unarmed. My teams were well trained in survival and in taking care of themselves.

When we moved out of South Vietnam in January of 1973, I took the mortuary out of Saigon, moved it to Samae San, and used that as a basis for development of building the central identification laboratory. When I moved that mortuary, there were 30 unidentified remains in the mortuary; during the year I was there, the identification people positively identified 10 of these remains.

I was fortunate in getting the services of Dr. Warren, who heads the Anthropological Department of the University of Illinois, to come out with Dr. Ferrare, an anthropologist from Japan, who came on a series of 90-day TDY's to assist in our training. A great percentage of the actual identification was accomplished during this period.

I am going to show some slides here of actual remains, and they are not a pretty sight. I apologize to the women who may see them.

The CHAIRMAN. That might also apply to some of the men present; do not worry about that.

General KINGSTON. The health and dental records were kept at the laboratory to assist the anthropologist in the identification of the remains.

There was a reefer in which the 30 remains, the initial remains that I took from the mortuary in Saigon, were kept, plus the other remains that we discovered and one recovered while we were in operation the year I was there.

When they were not being worked on, on the tables, they were stored and kept in the reefer. Some of the remains that we took from Saigon had flesh on the bones. All of the remains that we recovered were skeletal and no flesh.

The U.S. Army Medical Health Department gave us two complete skeletons so the identification people could compare bone parts and fragments. It is very difficult to identify remains when there is no head, no teeth. We were dealing with some remains that were a result of airplane crashes; they were burned; others were laid out, exposed to the elements for many years.

I had a sea operation in which the majority of the at-sea, in-shore, or near-shore crashes were between Nha Trang and Hue. We used a U.S.-flag ship, the type of ship that replenishes oil well drilling rigs at sea. We used this for about a 3-month period on the coast. The main instrument we used was a side-looking sonar buoy, that was dragged underwater, off the fantail of the ship. In a 24-hour period we could search a 4-mile bottom of the ocean.

[Slide.] This is a helicopter print. It is 170 feet under the water. You still get the outline of a helicopter; you still get the blades and the motors because it comes in relatively slow and hits the water before it sinks.

[Slide.] This is a fast mover, an RF-4 that hit off Myrtle Beach in 60 feet of water; when a jet aircraft moving at those speeds hits the water, it has a traumatic crash and disintegrates. We have to identify the parts to see if it contains our people. We had underwater TV and camera capability. We had both the light suit and the heavy suit for diving. We had the capability to dive up to 180 feet. The deepest we did off shore was 139.

The CHAIRMAN. Were these missions successful?

General KINGSTON. We did identify some of the crashes we were looking for; we obtained one partial human remains, but we were not able to identify any remains from this operation, sir. To answer your specific question, no, sir, in my opinion, we were not successful with this operation.

Again, the only remains we recovered were those of a pilot whose front went against the instrument panel when the aircraft hit. There was bone fragment imbedded in the instrument panel. That is the only human remains we recovered in this whole operation.

[Slide.] I would like to show a filmstrip. Before I do, these are the areas in all four parts of South Vietnam that we operated in while I was there. May I have the film, please.

[Film.] This is an operation 40 kilometers west of Nha Trang. A little Montagnard village is here.

This is the highland of South Vietnam. Through our public media, the Montagnards, and again most of the Montagnards were illiterate, learned that we were looking for our missing in action.

They had been out hunting. When they returned to the village, they informed the village chief they found a U.S. helicopter with many weapons and many bones. They could not read a map, so we had to take the leader of the hunting party up in a helicopter, fly around so he could identify a spot on the ground in which we could land and from which we could move overland to the crash site. All my aircraft were marked with four 1-foot stripes, the international orange to indicate we were working under the auspices of the Four-Party Joint Military Team.

It took them 2 days to get overland to the crash sites. When they got there, a monsoon typhoon came in. They were 2 more days on the ground before we could get to them.

Under the agreements, I was not allowed to bring in demolitions to blow a landing zone. We attempted to cut one about 2,000 meters up from the actual crash site on the mountain.

It was obvious it was going to take too long to cut by hand so I brought in the CH-53 Jolly Green Giant helicopter from Nakhon Phanom that we used to support our operations.

Again, the five-man team went in on the ground with the Montagnards. Once we got to the site, we went about 2,000 meters away from the crash site. This was the most logical way to insert the rest of the specialists before we conducted the search.

The Jolly Green, the CH-53, has 240 feet of cable that we went up and down on our operations. I trained the teams in all types of infiltra-

tion techniques, parachutes, helicopter, and also jungle penetrators from the helicopter.

On the same day, 4 years prior to this incident, two helicopters left Ban Me Thout and made their way or supposedly followed the road, route 23, from Ban Me Thout to Nha Trang. Neither helicopter showed up; they were both lost.

One had four Americans on it; the other had seven Americans on it. This helicopter had seven Americans; we retrieved all the remains we could. This was sufficient to enable my identification experts to positively identify all seven members of this craft. Again, you will see some actual human remains being recovered. That is not a pretty sight, but that is what we were after.

It is very time consuming. When the helicopter goes in, it is a traumatic crash usually followed by fire. And as I said, these remains were commingled as remains would be in a traumatic crash. The identification experts obviously had to get them straightened out, put all the remains together; and then after the commingling was straightened out, the business of identification went on. Because of the thickness of the canopy, there was hardly enough light to take the movie.

We worked closely with the host countries and very closely with the Americans in the host country. In this case Mr. James, the Counsel General from Nha Trang worked with us.

We went back to the Montagnard site and gave them some money and some food as a way of incentive. We did not use the word "reward." I used the word "incentive" to get the word around so we could get additional assistance from the Montagnards in the area. May I have the rest of the slides please.

Before we could go on an operation, we went through the U.S. Embassy in the country. We coordinated through my liaison officers through the host country civilian, political, and military personnel; and the U.S. Delegation of the Four-Party Joint Military Team who informed the team we were going into a crash or grave site.

In no case did they object, and in no case did they say it was all right, either. They acknowledged the receipt of our request. The JCRC was also tasked with picking up the remains of the POW's that died in captivity. Colonel Russell headed the U.S. delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Team.

The Bazook Cemetery is 12 miles southwest of Hanoi. When one of our POW's died in the prison camp, he was taken to this cemetery. He was put in a wooden coffin and buried in a shallow grave. Sometime after 18 months, the remains were exhumed and sent to the Ba Huyen Cemetery which is 43 kilometers southwest of Hanoi. When asked why they did that, the North Vietnamese said it was their custom.

We had three remains in the cemetery. This individual with whom we dealt was the chief interrogator on the part of the North Vietnamese for our visits to Hanoi. He was also the chief interrogator in the prison camps in North Vietnam.

Of the three Americans buried in this cemetery, two were ex-POW's; one was unidentified. In December 1973, he was the crew-member of a B-52 that was shot down, and they buried him here.

This is the only unidentified one that we picked up. We picked up 23 died in captivity and unidentified Americans, to include Lieutenant Colonel Hegam of the Air Force. He died on December 26, 1972, in a

prison camp. The unidentified also died in December 1972, shot down in a B-52.

Admiral McCain's son, with critical injuries, parachuted and landed in a lake unconscious, with multiple injuries. The reason I mention this is that another airman with similar injuries, as Commander McCain had, landing in an area of Laos or a mountainous area in North or South Vietnam, I do not believe would survive to get out. The Ba Huyen Cemetery is 43 kilometers outside Hanoi. The remainder of graves are located in this area.

During my year with the JCRC, we recovered 31 remains and resolved 132 cases. Most were not from the remains, of course, but were from a thorough analysis of the information available and the individual's record, talking with returned POW's, and all sorts of information that we had; and they were sufficient for us to come up with a recommendation that the status of the individuals be changed from missing in action to body not recovered.

I sent my findings to the memorial activities people in the Department of Defense. They analyzed what I had. If they agreed with my findings, then it went to the casualty people of each service; and if they thought it was sufficient, then the Secretary of the service changed the status.

Mr. GILMAN. Why is it that there were only 10 crash sites investigated there?

General KINGSTON. That was all I was allowed to go in on.

Mr. GILMAN. How long a period is that?

General KINGSTON. Eleven months. We went into some grave sites during this time.

Mr. GUYER. Are there 1,000 we have not visited?

General KINGSTON. That is correct.

Mr. GILMAN. Have there been additional crash sites investigated since that was completed?

General KINGSTON. No.

Mr. GILMAN. Our whole investigation is 10 crash sites, is that it?

General KINGSTON. That is correct. Since my departure, the South Vietnamese have come up with Caucasian remains. The JCRC sent the memorial service team from the Samae San into the country to pick up those remains, but an actual ground search has not been conducted since December 15 when an ambush killed—

Mr. GILMAN. That is in Communist territory, is it not?

The CHAIRMAN. That is in South Vietnam?

General KINGSTON. Friendly, quote "friendly."

The CHAIRMAN. That does not include Laos or North Vietnam?

General KINGSTON. Nor the territory held by the North Vietnamese.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there any good sites for inspection teams to go in, in Laos and South Vietnam and in North Vietnam, in your opinion?

General KINGSTON. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know where they are?

General KINGSTON. Yes.

Mr. GILMAN. Are there identifiable graves not exhumed?

General KINGSTON. Not to my knowledge.

The CHAIRMAN. Can we identify these bodies if you get the skull and the teeth?

General KINGSTON. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Does the length of time and weather make a difference?

General KINGSTON. That is correct. The seven that I showed in the film had crashed 3 years prior to our recovery. We made positive identification of all seven.

The CHAIRMAN. The skull and the teeth did not deteriorate after the first year?

General KINGSTON. Not to the point where identification could not be made.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you make positive identification from the skulls and the teeth?

General KINGSTON. I am not an expert in this area. That is how the anthropologist made them. Not just teeth alone, but with the cranial cavity and the skull fragments. By superimposing on existing photographs, they were able to do this.

By bringing both the photographs and the skull fragments back to the laboratory and superimposing the skull fragment on the picture, that is an acceptable method of identification.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think it would be profitable to the select committee to seek permission from the Southeast Asian nations for inspection teams to go to the known crash sites? Is there a possibility to find out what happened?

General KINGSTON. I believe we would, sir. If the mere fact that you come up with no finding at all and if you can positively identify the aircraft and find out if it was a jet aircraft, whether the ejection seat mechanism had been working or not—one of the crashes we investigated, we did not find any human remains—we found that the ejection seat had not been activated; so therefore, no one got out of that jet. The fact that we did not find remains was sufficient to change the status of these to body not recovered.

Mr. GUYER. Did you find any dog tags?

General KINGSTON. Yes, dog tags, ID cards, name tapes, some on uniform. We still have to take the human remains back and identify them.

Mr. GUYER. What condition would the bodies be that were in graves; would they deteriorate very fast?

General KINGSTON. The flesh would, yes, not the bone structure. We had one in military region 3 that was over 5 years on the bottom of a well. They threw him down there. We made positive identification on that remain.

The CHAIRMAN. Suppose they had been cremated?

General KINGSTON. Very difficult, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that a possibility?

General KINGSTON. It is a possibility that after a battle, the local population would cremate the remains for sanitation purposes. We have not, to my knowledge, run across that situation. It is very difficult to make identification, sir.

Mr. McCloskey. If we were able to obtain an agreement on their part to allow an unlimited search for our American personnel, how long would it take; how many crash sites would you want to investigate; and what kind of cooperation would you need from their people as far as the location, direction, guidance, and so forth?

General KINGSTON. We would need 100-percent cooperation because we would have to use their guides and their personnel to assist us in the ground search to make sure we are at the right site.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. You have got a team trained and you have got resources available. How many Americans would you want to send to Vietnam?

General KINGSTON. For one site?

Mr. McCLOSKEY. No, if they threw the whole area open to search.

General KINGSTON. Not more than 200.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. 200 Americans. How many crash sites would you want to investigate?

General KINGSTON. I do not have the exact figures. Again, my memory stops at January 1974, sir. But we are talking a couple hundred that we would like to go in on right away if we had the authority.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Do you have an estimate?

General KINGSTON. Well over 200.

The CHAIRMAN. All over Southeast Asia?

General KINGSTON. Yes. We have pretty good information that there are crashes in certain areas.

The CHAIRMAN. North and South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos?

General KINGSTON. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Not in the deep water. You think that is useless?

General KINGSTON. Yes. The normal operating procedure when a man goes overboard, or when a plane goes off a nose of an air carrier where they know a craft is, is to leave the ship on the surface for a specific period of time, a day, or 36 hours in case something floats up.

It is impossible to go back years later at sea where a plane landed.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. If they said, "Yes, we will allow this to go forward," you would want to set up a headquarters in Hanoi or Saigon. You would send out teams for 200 crash sites.

General KINGSTON. That is a rough memory that we know we can go in right now.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. How long would it take to accomplish this, assuming you got prior cooperation from them as to location and guides and no problems going in? How long would it take your group to do this?

General KINGSTON. Several years. You do not walk into a site like this and do it in 1 day. It takes time.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Do you need ordnance experts before you go in?

General KINGSTON. Yes, we bring in ordnance people. They are the first ones to go in to a crash or grave site to make sure it is not booby-trapped, to make sure the explosives on the aircraft are not live. We pick up things, and we search things, and pick up engines and have to search under the engines and the aircraft wings and all that.

The CHAIRMAN. If we had unlimited access, which I hope we will have, to Southeast Asia and knowing we have over 200 crash sites representing between 1,100 to 1,500 Americans presumed dead, how many remains do you think we could bring out? I know this is a difficult question.

General KINGSTON. Not anywhere near that. This site we found, where we thought it went down or should have gone down following the road from Ban Me Thout, was over 18 kilometers off.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you say 250 to 500?

General KINGSTON. I would say probably several hundred.

The CHAIRMAN. Would that be the maximum?

General KINGSTON. Yes, sir. A lot of these crash sites were in South Vietnam. They were going from one point to another point, and they never showed up. All we got was a radar transmission and then blank.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They have moved the JCRC to Samae San?

General KINGSTON. Yes, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. Is that the entire JCRC, or has it been smaller?

General KINGSTON. Considerably reduced. They only have two separate field teams at this time. You will be able to find out exactly when you get there.

Mr. GILMAN. Any other specialists?

General KINGSTON. Yes, sir. Memorial service people are still there.

Mr. GILMAN. Any plans to dissolve it completely at this point?

General KINGSTON. Not to my knowledge. I think we should keep the identification capability. One of the most difficult things we had to do when we started was to develop expertise for identification.

Mr. GILMAN. As far as you know, it is maintained by the Resolution Center in Samae San with some basic units there?

General KINGSTON. Yes, or some other place in Southeast Asia.

The CHAIRMAN. Any other questions?

Mr. GILMAN. During your tenure out there, that was in 1973?

General KINGSTON. Yes.

Mr. GILMAN. Did you see any reports of American prisoners aside from the ones who were returned to us?

General KINGSTON. We had information that the other side, particularly the North Vietnamese, had in their possession American prisoners of war. We had photographs from newspapers, Japanese, Eastern Europe. Lieutenant Dodge comes to mind—we had pictures of him being led by two helmeted Vietnamese. He never showed up; he died in captivity. He never showed up on the released POW list.

The U.S. Delegation of the Four Party Joint Military Team wanted the status of Americans that they had in their hands at one time. The other side did not acknowledge receipt of, nor did they answer, the questions of the Chief of the U.S. Delegation.

Mr. GILMAN. How many cases did you have of men that were seen alive in captivity but not heard from subsequent to that time?

General KINGSTON. I do not know accurately.

Mr. GILMAN. Can you estimate how many there were?

General KINGSTON. Around 100.

The CHAIRMAN. Any others?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I might have missed this one earlier, but at the time you were last with the Joint Commission, you had followed all the procedures and everything and had no reason to expect anything hostile.

General KINGSTON. That is correct.

Mr. GONZALEZ. The person who died because of that fire, was he American?

General KINGSTON. Yes.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Was there any identification of the source of that hostile fire?

General KINGSTON. No; the day before, we were on the ground. The press visited the craft site the day before with my people.

Mr. GONZALEZ. How many were in that party at that time?

General KINGSTON. In my party?

Mr. GONZALEZ. All together; about how many Americans compared to non-Americans?

General KINGSTON. The crew members of the helicopters were South Vietnamese. There were four Americans per helicopter, a total of three helicopters a team. There were approximately 18.

Mr. GILMAN. In that search mission?

General KINGSTON. Yes.

Mr. GILMAN. You were given 2 weeks advance notice to it, is not that correct?

General KINGSTON. Yes; to the Four Party Joint Military Team.

Mr. GILMAN. You were going in at a particular site?

General KINGSTON. At a particular time, yes.

Mr. GILMAN. You were unarmed?

General KINGSTON. Yes.

Mr. GONZALEZ. In that search territory, who was in actual physical control of the area?

General KINGSTON. This was only 17 miles southwest of Saigon. The South Vietnamese were in full control of the area.

Mr. GONZALEZ. There is no case as to what the source of that hostile fire was?

General KINGSTON. Assumed to be enemies.

The CHAIRMAN. North Vietnam or Vietcong?

General KINGSTON. We were unable to identify.

Mr. GONZALEZ. That terminated it?

General KINGSTON. The actual operations, yes.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Was that because there were no assurances forthcoming as to the safety of the members of the Joint Commission?

General KINGSTON. That is my belief. I left shortly after that. I am sure that the U.S. Embassy could not say, send the teams with a certain amount of assurity.

Mr. GONZALEZ. The American's body was recovered?

General KINGSTON. Yes; and the dead South Vietnamese sergeant; his remains were recovered also.

Mr. GONZALEZ. From your experience, which is considerable, what do you feel should be our line of approach? Obviously if we are ever going to have any intelligent way of recovering, it would have to be done on the systematic basis that you so well handled.

From your experience, do you think there is a reasonable chance that some kind of an understanding could be brought forth now, such as was intimated by Mr. McCloskey?

General KINGSTON. I think because of the very nature of their system and suspiciousness, it would be probably controlled to the extent that I would question the usefulness.

What I could say, sir, is that working, say in Saigon, or in Hanoi, or in Vientiane on an individual case-by-case basis, turning what information I have over to the host of the government, telling them where we think a crash is, let them go to the crash or grave site, exhume the remains, and deliver the remains to us, I think that might be acceptable.

Mr. GONZALEZ. If that type of an arrangement were acceptable, would they have the resources to do that as it should be?

General KINGSTON. I do not believe the South Vietnamese will.

Mr. GONZALEZ. It seems to me whether they would like it or not, we would have to use our military.

General KINGSTON. That is why we insisted in setting up this organization that Americans were allowed overflight and landing rights inside the country to do the physical search and the physical retrieval of the remains.

Mr. GONZALEZ. This may be repetitious. Is it your feeling or opinion that there are Americans yet alive in Vietnam?

General KINGSTON. No, sir, I do not believe there are Americans still alive in Southeast Asia, with the possible exception of eastern Cambodia; and they are probably not military.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. GUYER. These explosives, were there two kinds, some planted by the other side and some we had planted?

General KINGSTON. We found none planted by the other side.

Mr. GUYER. Do we have knowledge of the ones we put down? Are they not afraid of that?

General KINGSTON. We are cautious when we are moving into certain areas.

The CHAIRMAN. You can tell by the questions how much interest the committee has, General Kingston, and you have been most helpful to the committee.

If you have any suggestions in this area, we would appreciate hearing from you.

Thank you for appearing today.

I would remind the members to remain following adjournment for a brief informal discussion.

The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:30, the hearing was adjourned.]

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 18, 1975

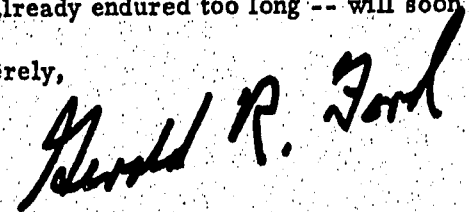
Dear Sonny:

I want to thank you and Congressman McCloskey for the information you provided me yesterday concerning the work of your Committee. The energy and effort that you and your colleagues have devoted to this work are most impressive. I hope that your travel to Southeast Asia this weekend will bring progress in obtaining information on our dead and missing.

Our attitude toward the new regimes in Indochina is open-minded. We are prepared to look to the future, not to the past, in our dealings with them, and we are prepared to reciprocate gestures of good will. This will be particularly true if they deal constructively with the problem of our dead and missing.

I regard the return of the remains of Americans killed in Indochina and the provision of information on those still missing as an issue of highest importance. My most sincere hope is that our efforts to resolve it will be successful and that the anguish of the families concerned -- which has already endured too long -- will soon be ended.

Sincerely,



The Honorable G. V. Montgomery
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1975

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING PERSONS
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA,
Washington, D.C.

The select committee met at 2:40 p.m., pursuant to notice, in room H-227, the Capitol, Hon. G. V. Montgomery—chairman of the select committee—presiding.

Members present: Representatives Montgomery, Gonzalez, Moakley, Schroeder, Ottinger, Harkin, Gilman, and Guyer.

Staff members present: J. Angus MacDonald, staff director; Dr. Job L. Dittberner, Dr. Henry J. Kenny, and Jeanne Shirkey, professional staff members.

The CHAIRMAN. We will call the meeting to order. After the open session hearing, Dr. Kenny, I would like to go into an informal executive session to talk about several matters pertaining to the committee.

We are very glad to have a member of our staff today, Dr. Kenny, who, by directions of the committee, was instructed to go to Southeast Asia, first to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC), and to Bangkok, Thailand, and then into Vientiane, Laos, where he met with some of the officials of the Pathet Lao Government, and also some of our own people.

I have asked Dr. Kenny to tell it like it is, what he saw, and this is the first time that any members, including myself, have had the opportunity to have this report.

I might say before Dr. Kenny starts that he is a graduate of West Point, he was wounded in Vietnam, and was retired from the service. He later received his master's and his Ph. D. degrees, and we are very pleased to have him working for the select committee.

STATEMENT OF DR. HENRY J. KENNY, PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER

Dr. KENNY. Thank you, sir.¹

I traveled to Southeast Asia via Paris, where I visited and talked with Mr. Jean Sainteny, who was formerly a French Commissioner in North Vietnam and also Chief of the French Military Mission to North Vietnam. He has had extensive contacts with the Politburo of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam over the past 30 years and is currently President of the French National Committee for Assistance to Indochina.

¹ Biographical data of Dr. Kenny appears on p. 140.

Mr. Sainteny expressed little hope that any Americans might be alive in Indochina, with the possible rare exception of a deserter, a technician, or an amnesia victim.

In Laos, he said the probability of survival by a downed American airman were slim. In cases where someone was known to be alive on the ground, a combination of food shortage, difficult climate, and terrain, and poor or nonexistent medical facilities made survival unlikely.

In addition, the primitive conditions under which the Pathet Lao operated would cause them, he said, not to keep prisoners. He felt Vietnam was the place to get information. Hanoi was the place the Vietnamese kept records on prisoners captured anywhere in Indochina.

His recommendation to the select committee, therefore, would be to send an American civilian group to Hanoi to act as a humanitarian liaison group on behalf of the MIA's and POW's and their families. Such a group, he said, should be small, well-qualified, and able to get along with the Vietnamese.

He stressed that people should go to Hanoi, not with the stated goal of securing return of living POW's or MIA's, but to get documents available with respect to death.

I next visited the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Thailand. Two significant impressions were derived from this visit. First, that of the total remains of Americans in Indochina, we may expect to obtain and repatriate back to the United States only about 10 percent of the total number of known dead and missing.

Now, what is the reason for this? First, most crash sites are in unknown locations. I give the definition of a "crash site," as an area of known aircraft loss, with missing or dead persons associated with the crash.

There are 798 of these crash sites listed in the JCRC records, and of that 798, 54 percent are listed as being in an unknown location. It could be, for example, the end of a runway or a last-heard radio transmission, with little or no way to identify the exact location of these sites.

In South Vietnam prior to May of 1975, the JCRC had helped in over 2,000 efforts made to locate MIA's. These efforts included publications, broadcasts, visit by JCRC representatives, by locals, indigenous, and by U.S. operations and other methods of communication; and during this approximately 2-year period of effort, only 24 recoveries were ever made in South Vietnam, that is, 24 Americans that were recovered and identified. The record of this 2-year effort indicates that the estimated recovery rate for all of Indochina would indeed be about 10 percent of the total listed bodies not recovered and missing in action. That is, of the 2,500 or so, we could expect about 10 percent recovery, based upon this information.

The second impression I had of the JCRC is that they had an outstanding capability to identify individual remains. They have anthropological specialists, and they correlate data closely with the information they receive and analyze in their records and files. They also have a very good capability to train locals or third-country nationals, if necessary, and they sometimes identify even ashes, as they did in one case.

The CHAIRMAN. Did you say ashes?

Dr. KENNY. Yes, sir, this is a difficult thing to do, but they have done it.

I next visited Vientiane. While in Vientiane, I had the opportunity to meet with three members of the new government. One was Mr. Sone Khamvanevongsa, who was the representative of the Lao Patriotic Front—that is the Pathet Lao—in Vientiane. The next was Soubanh Srithirath, Chief of the Cabinet of the Foreign Ministry, and lastly Dr. Chansamone Vongsaphay, the Director of Political Affairs in the Foreign Ministry.

I presented to all three of these individuals the interests of the select committee, explaining its formation, membership, purpose, and plans. I noted the overwhelming vote to establish the select committee in the Congress. I noted that at the time of the peace agreement, the United States had approximately 350 MIA's and over a couple of hundred bodies not recovered, and 6 POW's listed in Laos.

I expressed the committee's concern for these men, and the gratefulness of the families for their return.

I noted the committee was also concerned with missing civilians, such as Dean and Sharman, who disappeared in Laos in 1974.

I gave a particular site to all three of them, where we believe that quite a few Americans had been lost. I used this as an example, to illustrate the kind of site about which we had good, hard information. This is a site located in southern Laos. I gave them the time of the crash and some details to identify the particular site, hoping that this would result in a useful gesture on their part.

I emphasized to all three the possibility of a live American being located somewhere in a remote village or farm in Laos. I particularly noted that given the size of the country, the sparsity of the population, and the fact that the war was going on, but was now over, that conditions might exist now to find such a person whereas it would previously have been impossible or more difficult to do so.

I wish to report their responses to these questions, beginning with the question of remains. Mr. Sone, the Pathet Lao representative in Vientiane, seemed genuinely interested in the problems of the committee. He copied the information I presented, including the location of the crash site. He said he had no direct knowledge of the site, but would check into it, as well as the matter of returning all remains that they could find.

Mr. Soubanh was not forthcoming in his response here. He asked whether repatriation of remains was a precondition of American aid to Laos.

Mr. Chansamone, while unable to provide specific information, indicated he was very interested in the work of the committee, stating that he would make every effort to help us in this humanitarian endeavor.

Regarding the possibility of a live American in Laos, all three responded by saying that all prisoners had been returned just after the agreement of February 1973.

Mr. Sone responded by stating that the local authorities had previously investigated the possibility of a live American somewhere in the remote areas of Laos, but could report none. He said, however, that conditions in the country had been unstable, with many refugees

moving back and forth and with fighting recurring in many areas even after the peace. He emphasized that the people had been pre-occupied with these things. He did agree to make further inquiries regarding this, and said "I will do all that I can."

Mr. Soubanh again took a hard line, emphasizing once again that all prisoners had been returned. I would like to point out that he did not deny the possibility of a live American, but simply reiterated position of previous Pathet Lao officials, defending their previous statements.

Mr. Chansamone said that although he knew of no live Americans, he felt there was a possibility of finding a live American MIA in the villages or farms, and again said he would do all he could within his present position, and would make inquiries regarding this.

Mr. GILMAN. What is his title?

Dr. KENNY. Director of Political Affairs in the Foreign Ministry.

The question of aid also arose during my talks with these three individuals. Mr. Sone mentioned that aid was badly needed, and that any effort made by the select committee in this regard would be welcome.

He did not tie aid in to any previous American activities in Laos. Mr. Soubanh did do this. He emphasized that aid was a duty and an obligation of the United States in order to heal the wounds of war. He pointed out how Laos had been devastated by American bombers, and described cluster bomb units and bomb craters as being scattered throughout the countryside. He compared the United States to a hit-and-run driver, who leaves the scene of the accident without taking care of the injured victim, and clearly tied aid into what we might call reparations.

Since he was a graduate of St. Cyr in France, I mentioned that reparations had also been paid by Germany to France after World War I, and this was the cause of World War II.

I indicated that I could not promise aid, but that the select committee would be glad to discuss the question with him upon their arrival in Vientiane.

I would like to mention that all three Lao officials were very courteous. Mr. Sone not only shook hands and gave the traditional Lao bow, but he did so again after I had gotten in the car to leave. It was most unusual, I was told, back at the Embassy. In fact, the Embassy had not ever met this man or had a contact with him. He is new in the area.

I would like to mention also that while I was speaking with Mr. Chansamone, two men entered the room with ladders and climbed up and took down the picture of the King. Mr. Chansamone announced that there would be an announcement, and half an hour later an announcement was made that the 700-year monarchy had come to an end.

I spoke to several other people in Vientiane, I met with the British and Australian attachés, the Soviet attaché, and the Secretary General of the International Control Commission. The International Control Commission is just about out of business. I also spoke with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) representative in Vientiane, and also with Mr. Alexander Casella, another UNHCR representative who was stopping off in Vientiane a couple of days prior to going to Hanoi and Saigon.

I conveyed our interests to all these men, and received certain information which I can describe later or have entered in the record, if you like.

While in Thailand I spoke with Alan Dawson, the UPI correspondent. On the way home, I stopped at Hong Kong for a day and had an excellent briefing from an officer there who has been interviewing returnees from Vietnam.

I have relevant information that I would like to ask permission to enter into the record as well as the testimony here.¹

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, so ordered.

Dr. KENNY. I also have one final thing, and that is pictures of the new government that came from the local newspaper the day that the King was forced to abdicate.

The CHAIRMAN. As I mentioned earlier, before most of the members had come in, that after questions I would hope the members would stay here for just a few minutes and informally discuss two matters that are before the select committee, and it should be done in executive session.

In effect, am I stating it right that the Pathet Lao, the ones that you did meet, were willing to talk?

Dr. KENNY. Yes, sir, very willing to talk and very willing to meet the select committee. I might point out that there were no formal appointments made until after I arrived in Vientiane. It was only after an evening dinner buffet at the home of the Chargé that I met the three Pathet Lao officials; but they seemed more than willing to talk and indicated that they would be willing to meet members of the select committee.

The CHAIRMAN. And they indicated they were holding no American prisoners?

Dr. KENNY. Yes, sir, that is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Were they familiar with the number of Americans that had crashed into Laos? Did you give them that?

Dr. KENNY. I gave them the total numbers.

The CHAIRMAN. What is the total?

Dr. KENNY. We have a total of 577 Americans missing and the bodies not recovered in Laos. We had at the time of the agreement 350 Americans missing, but that number has since decreased due to presumptive findings of death. But the total number of Americans whose bodies are not recovered in Laos, as well as total number of missing is 577 at this time.

The CHAIRMAN. What about the prisoners that they did capture? Did you get into that?

Dr. KENNY. Yes; I did, and they denied any knowledge. I mentioned the specific names of the prisoners, and they denied any knowledge of these individuals.

The CHAIRMAN. How far can you move outside of Vientiane?

Dr. KENNY. We are now allowed to move 15 miles out of Vientiane. I only got out 3 or 4 miles on any given occasion. I did visit one village there.

The CHAIRMAN. You were allowed to go 15 miles out. Did any foreigners go to the Plain of Jars?

¹ See reports prepared by BioTechnology, Inc., pp. 145-225, and reports presented by Life Sciences Division, U.S.A.F., pp. 255-293.

Dr. KENNY. Not now. The only foreigners who are allowed outside the 15-mile limit are the Russians; I stayed in the Lane Xang Hotel near the Mekong, at which many Russians were staying.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gonzalez?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I don't have any questions at this time.

The CHAIRMAN. We will come back. Mr. Gilman?

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. KENNY. I am very much interested in the information you brought back to us. You stated the crash sites had been reduced down to a figure of some 798?

Dr. KENNY. Yes, sir, that is right.

Mr. GILMAN. How did they reduce that number down from the crash sites that the JCRC had previously listed about a year ago?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, that is for all of Southeast Asia?

Dr. KENNY. Yes, sir, that is all Southeast Asia. The total depends on the definition of a crash site. If you add to that water sites, which is included as a separate item, there are 58 water sites in addition to that. They also have 283 ground sites. A ground site is defined as an area of known loss of missing or dead personnel associated with ground action, but as far as aircraft sites are concerned, there are 798 aircraft that have crashed on the land in Indochina, and which have missing or dead Americans associated with the crash.

Mr. GILMAN. How many ground sites were there?

Dr. KENNY. 283.

Mr. GILMAN. You said there were some 2,000 efforts to locate MIA's in a 2-year period, and the JCRC representative, General Kingston, who testified before our committee, stated they were only able to investigate some 12 crash sites since, I guess 1973, if I am not mistaken, or whatever that date was.

Dr. KENNY. Yes, sir, that is true. What these include are only while General Kingston commanded the JCRC; the next commander emphasized indigenous operations. These were teams of trained indigenous personnel who also went out to search for people. The teams were principally Americans during the first phase, when General Robert C. Kingston commanded the JCRC, but in the second phase, under Joseph R. Ulatoski, the teams were principally indigenous. However, there are other efforts besides these. They include radio broadcasting, dropping leaflets to the local population, advertising the fact that if they see a downed airplane, to report it. There was also a JCRC representative in each Corps area of South Vietnam, who made visits to villages attempting to broadcast this effort.

Mr. GILMAN. Dr. Kenny, out of your total effort of 2,000 how many of those were crash sites investigations?

Dr. KENNY. It is approximately 100. I can get the exact figure for you, sir. That is the number of individuals in the JCRC data base for which teams conducted searches.

Mr. GILMAN. Out of the 100 they found some 24 recoveries?

Dr. KENNY. Twenty-four individuals were recovered as a result of all efforts. In order to put this in perspective, under General Kingston, actual operations were conducted to search 12 crash sites. Only two of these were successful, from which they brought back about eight individuals.

Mr. GILMAN. When you are citing the 10 percent figure, are you basing the 10 percent on 2,000 efforts, which could include leaflets and other things?

Dr. KENNY. Ten percent is the estimated total recovery of all American known dead and MIA, by all efforts.

Mr. GILMAN. That is not actually an accurate projection, is it? If we had about 100 operations against individuals at crash sites and brought back 24 bodies, it would seem to me you would have a different projection.

Dr. KENNY. Twenty-four is the total number of American remains recovered in South Vietnam—only a portion of which resulted from the operations by U.S. or indigenous teams. The sites carried are in two categories. There were burial sites and crash sites. What I spoke about were the crash sites. That is, a crash site is nothing but an airplane that is down somewhere. The JCRC may not even know where it is. Out of the 798 crash sites there are over half that they don't even know where they are.

Out of the burial sites, and again I have information which I can provide for the record, there is a higher probability of recovering remains. The effort to investigate and search these burial sites can produce a better chance of recovering remains. If you add the total number of burial sites in Indochina and the probability of what you will get in terms of past effort to investigate burial sites, and add to that what the JCRC think they can get out of the crash sites, then you only come up with a figure of about 10-percent recovery rate applied against all MIA and bodies not recovered in Indochina.

Mr. GILMAN. Dr. Kenny, of the 2,000 efforts, how many were involved in investigation of burial sites?

Dr. KENNY. I do not have that information readily available, sir, but I will provide it for you.

Mr. GILMAN. Is all this information supplied to you by JCRC?

Dr. KENNY. Yes, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. And that is in writing and attached to the record?

Dr. KENNY. Yes, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. All right.

This one gentlemen, Chansamone Vongsaphay, Director of Political Affairs, he said there was a possibility of some prisoners being held in some villages. Was that your testimony?

Dr. KENNY. He thought this was a realistic possibility. He didn't know about any that were held in any villages, but he thought it would be a possibility. He said he would make inquiries regarding it. I did go to great lengths to describe that I thought that this was a realistic possibility to him just prior to that, citing the vast remoteness of Laos and the hidden villages and farms that they may not even know about, and the possibility of the local administration's having knowledge of MIA's unknown to the central government, and that it would be possible for somebody to be held prisoner, either by unwillingness or as a deserter.

Mr. GILMAN. We were there about a year ago, and the Pathet Lao stated they could not do any investigations because they did not have proper security. Have they been able to do any investigations since that date on their own?

Dr. KENNY. According to one individual, they had canvassed the local administrations after the cease-fire and prior to the time I talked to them. I had not gotten a firm idea from the other two that anything like this had occurred. They didn't say anything like that had occurred. One of them indicated he would try to check on this, and thought it would be a good idea.

Mr. GILMAN. Did he give any indication that they have some agency at work on this?

Dr. KENNY. I have no indication that they have an agency at work on it. The Joint Committee to Implement the Agreement has been dissolved. That was the organization which had been responsible for the MIA question.

Now this is being handled by the Foreign Ministry. So I have no indication that they have any particular group.

Mr. GILMAN. We hope their Foreign Ministry is more successful than our Department of State has been. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Moakley?

Mr. MOAKLEY. You are aware that when we met with Vo Van Sung, he indicated they had an agency?

Dr. KENNY. Yes; in his country, but in Laos they did not indicate anything.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Were they in touch with the Ambassador of North Vietnam?

Dr. KENNY. I mentioned that the committee was going to meet with him, but I did not make inquiries about Lao conversations with DRV officials.

Mr. MOAKLEY. When we talked to the Ambassador, he said he was going to talk to the Government of Laos and look into the possibility of the missing in action. I wondered if there was a followup?

Dr. KENNY. Four of the conversations with them were prior to your meeting, and one of them was after the meeting. I did meet the Pathet Lao representative in Vientiane again at the airport; a chance meeting, and we just went over the same kind of ground. There was nothing new. It was just a cordiality, but he had no feedback from the meeting in Paris at that time. At least he didn't indicate any.

Mr. MOAKLEY. You said that one of the gentlemen said that he would like to know what kind of American aid they would receive if some of these bodies were turned over?

Dr. KENNY. No. They just indicated they wanted aid, and one of the individuals, the Chief of Cabinet in the Foreign Ministry, requested aid as American reparations for war damage, but he didn't indicate what kind of aid.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Did he mention the missing in action when he talked about the aid though?

Dr. KENNY. Yes. He asked if their return of missing in actions was a precondition of our giving aid.

Mr. MOAKLEY. What was your reply?

Dr. KENNY. I said I did not believe it was, but it might be helpful.

Mr. MOAKLEY. I came in late, could we have a photostatic copy of Dr. Kenny's statement?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Mrs. Schroeder?

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I apologize for being late, and I appreciate your statement.

Maybe you touched on this, but in your opinion would there be any purpose for this committee to engage in further talks with the Laotians? I understood you to say that they are looking into it, or they hoped to do so. Was there anything more concrete than that?

Dr. KENNY. No; there was no concrete statement that they knew of anyone who was alive, or even that they knew of crash sites. But I think now the new government is in charge, that this would be a very opportune time to approach them. I think we could approach them with the point of view that now that peace is restored, and they finally are in control, that we need not deal through indirection or through third parties, or through the royal government or through anyone else, but we can speak directly to the power in the country.

I think it is a most opportune time for the select committee to meet with them.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. So you think it is a good time for the committee members to sit down with them to say that we are concerned with this, and you think they would listen and be able to act on it? The situation is no longer as chaotic as it was?

Dr. KENNY. That is true.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. They won't come in with ladders and take pictures down while we are there?

Dr. KENNY. No; I don't think so. I must say it was a rather difficult time that week, because the situation in Vientiane as you know, was quite fluid. The Pathet Lao were really enthralled with the revolution at the time, but they are now in complete control, and there is no doubt about it. There was a mass rally the day after I left, of about 100,000 people, and there were broadcasts in the marketplace, and almost on every block with a great deal, I might add, of anti-American sentiment in these broadcasts. They were blaming most of the ills of the society on Americans. This is the feeling that you get.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Your impression is that this control extends specifically beyond Vientiane?

Dr. KENNY. Very definitely. While I was at the airport, a YAK-40 aircraft arrived with a Russian crew, so the Russians are there at least in the capacity of trying to transport things.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. If I may recharacterize your testimony from what I picked up toward the end, the MIA issue has been rather on the back burner?

Dr. KENNY. I would say so, and I would think that, especially in the recent past, during the time in which the Pathet Lao were consolidating control, for example since May when the U.S. AID mission was thrown out, and when the coalition government began to disintegrate, from May until now, I think the MIA issue has been very much on the back burner.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I just wanted to ask you: Did you ask anyone about Cambodia?

Dr. KENNY. Yes; I made inquiries about Cambodia, but I did not get good information about Cambodia.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. They don't seem to have many contacts there either?

Dr. KENNY. No; I talked with Alan Dawson in Bangkok about that situation, and I talked to some of the political officers in Bangkok and

Hong Kong, and no one seems to have a good grasp of the situation in Cambodia. One of the problems is that in dealings which people have had, they feel they are not talking with the real power there either.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Why don't we try to go ahead and see if we can finish our questions? We have at least 10 minutes, I would say, before we have to go vote, and then if the members have no objection, we will meet on the House floor to discuss a couple of urgent matters. That will save having the members come back, because I know some of you are interested in that legislation. Who has a question?

Mr. GUYER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Dr. KENNY, I think the one remaining and outstanding question in the minds of all the concerned people is, are there living Americans, and I think this is a paramount aspect of the remaining issues, and with your experience, both your war experience and postwar observations, would you feel that there could be some Americans living?

Dr. KENNY. Yes; there could be.

Mr. GUYER. That is important, I think.

Dr. KENNY. I think that I would qualify that by saying that I don't think there are a lot of them. That is only my personal opinion.

Mr. GUYER. Yes.

Dr. KENNY. And the type of prisoners you might be talking about, or the type of Americans you might be talking about—I would think it would be more likely that a deserter would be there, but it would be very possible someone else could be there also.

Mr. GUYER. We do know that military people were found alive after World War II on both Okinawa and in the Philippines, people who were not deserters, who were hiding out on their own, and they could have walked away from the scene. Would there have been enough friendliness in Vietnam for such people to have been taken in and to have survived?

Dr. KENNY. No, I don't think so. I talked to the British defense attaché, who—if he is not the world's foremost expert on survival—he nearly is. He thought it would be most difficult for anyone to survive in that type of terrain, especially in view of its lack of good or sufficient food.

Mr. GUYER. My question is more directed to the fact that before the takeover by the new government, there could have been friendly people. Now, would those people be in fear of bringing them forth because of retribution? That is my thought.

Dr. KENNY. This is the most realistic possibility.

Mr. GUYER. You won't know that until you get into it. Suppose a person walked away from the site of a crash and at that time they were on our side.

Dr. KENNY. It could be possible if he happened to get into a friendly village. I understand the Pathet Lao had a rather weak command and control system, so this would be a possibility.

Mr. GUYER. I can't see any villagers coming forth to the new regime and saying, "We have had people here."

Dr. KENNY. Unless the regime makes it clear that government policy is to reward such action.

Mr. GUYER. We have talked in terms of people being prisoners, and it is possible some walked away that are not in prison.

Dr. KENNY. This is the idea I presented to them, the possibility of someone being alive in a remote village or a remote farm.

Mr. GUYER. It may be that the last word from a plane could have been that an individual was all right. With regard to the 82 names, there could be some evidence of hope for some survival.

Dr. KENNY. I think we are talking about a small number of people here. I would say less than a handful.

The CHAIRMAN. Less than five?

Dr. KENNY. Yes; that would be my personal impression, but it is just a guess.

Mr. GUYER. Until we get a report on the 82 hard names in final form, I think we have to assume we need an explanation of what happened, if they were assumed to be alive at one time.

The CHAIRMAN. Eighty-two hard names pertains to Vietnam.

Dr. KENNY. It is up to 107.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ottinger?

Mr. OTTINGER. What were the positions of the three Pathet Lao officials that you mentioned?

Dr. KENNY. Mr. Sone Khamvanevongsa is the Lao Patriotic Front representative in Vientiane. The Lao Patriotic Front is the Pathet Lao. It is similar to the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam. It is an organization to complete the revolution. Now that they have completed the revolution, that organization may fall back in a less prominent position.

Mr. Soubanh Srithirath is the Chef de Cabinet of the Foreign Ministry and Mr. Chansamone Vongsaphay is the Director of Political Affairs in the Foreign Ministry.

Mr. OTTINGER. Where does the Government sit?

Dr. KENNY. In Vientiane at this time. However, the party sits in Vieng Say in Sam Neua Province. The political party controls, to a large extent, the Government.

Mr. OTTINGER. So the center of the Government is in Vieng Say?

Dr. KENNY. The people, whose pictures you have, who really run the country, are in Vientiane. However, their headquarters up to this time had been in Vieng Say, the Pathet Lao headquarters which directed the Lao Patriotic Front.

Mr. OTTINGER. And Sone?

Dr. KENNY. Sone is a member of the Patriotic Front. The others are in the government and worked for the Foreign Ministry, whom you see here.

Mr. OTTINGER. You say they said they would welcome a meeting with the committee?

Dr. KENNY. Yes.

Mr. OTTINGER. Were they speaking for the Government?

Dr. KENNY. They were high enough in the Foreign Ministry that I would say so. For example, Mr. Sone met the Foreign Minister at the airport. They did say that they would be willing to meet the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. We have about 2 more minutes. What else have you got?

Mr. HARKIN. Dr. Kenny, the only question I have is, do you feel that there is any basis, other than some form of economic aid, by which U.S. forces would be allowed into Laos to look for remains and look for crash sites? I know what basis we are dealing with the Vietnamese on, but I don't know on what basis we are dealing with the Laotian Government at all.

First of all, do you think they would let American forces in to look for crash sites?

Dr. KENNY. I think it would be doubtful. I think they would rather have some neutral group do it. I say this because of the anti-American propaganda all over Vientiane, painted signs and broadcasts and so forth. I don't think they would switch this type of official expression at this time very quickly.

The CHAIRMAN. I think we had better go.

Mr. OTTINGER. Would you give us one last thing?

Were you given any evidence that any Americans were alive?

Dr. KENNY. No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. You were given no evidence of that?

Dr. KENNY. No sir, I was given no evidence that any Americans are alive.

The CHAIRMAN. Let's meet in the well of the House and I will give you information you should have. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:25 p.m. the select committee adjourned to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

REPORT ON SPECIAL MEETINGS OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE

CONTENTS

	Page
Informal meeting with Ambassador Bush, September 17, 1975-----	91
Breakfast meeting with Secretary Kissinger, November 14, 1975-----	92
Discussions with the Vietnamese delegation in Paris, December 6, 1975---	93
Discussion with Red Cross officials in Geneva, December 7, 1975-----	95
Meeting with the President, December 17, 1975-----	96
Discussion with officials in Indochina, December 21 and 22, 1975-----	97

(89)

INFORMAL MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR BUSH,
SEPTEMBER 17, 1975

Persons attending: Gillespie V. Montgomery, chairman, Henry B. Gonzalez, John J. Moakley, Patricia Schroeder, Richard L. Ottinger, Tom Harkin, Jim Lloyd, Benjamin A. Gilman, Tennyson Guyer, and Ambassador Bush.

SUMMARY

Members of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia met on Wednesday, September 17, 1975, with Ambassador George Bush, Chief of U.S. Liaison Office to the People's Republic of China.

The purpose of this first meeting of the select committee was to hear the views of the Ambassador regarding Americans missing in action in Southeast Asia and to consider committee business.

AMBASSADOR BUSH

Ambassador Bush stated that the Department of State is satisfied that no Americans are being held as prisoners of war in China. The Ambassador was asked to comment on reports that American prisoners of war had been moved from North Vietnam. Mr. Bush told the committee that in his view the reports were false and that no such movement was possible without the Chinese knowing of it. He indicated that in his opinion the Chinese would not condone such activity. It is the opinion of the Department of State, he said, that China does not feel that it is in a position to intervene with the Governments of Southeast Asia concerning U.S. MIA's and POW's.

The Ambassador noted that communication between North Vietnamese and American officials in Peking has been virtually nonexistent, so that Peking would probably not provide a medium through which discussion of the MIA/POW issue could take place. He suggested, however, seeking the good offices of other countries which have diplomatic representation in Hanoi.

Having completed the discussion with Ambassador Bush, the members took up committee business at this, their first meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH NORTH VIETNAMESE

Members of the select committee reviewed a letter that Mr. Ottinger and 27 other Members of Congress had sent to North Vietnam requesting help in resolving the MIA/POW problem. He explained that they had received written clarification of the DRV response, which was viewed initially as a rejection of the Congressmen's request. The clarification indicated that the North Vietnamese would be willing to discuss MIA matters with the United States with no preconditions.

PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Chairman Montgomery then reviewed procedures and plans by which the select committee could carry out its congressional mandate. He asked the members to suggest ideas for committee activity, staffing, and procedures. He also suggested possible trips to Thailand, Laos, and Paris. The purpose of these committee trips would be as follows:

Thailand: Visit and inspect, and become familiar with the joint casualty resolution center (JCRC) and the central identification laboratory (CIL) which are the Department of Defense units charged with maintaining case files on all missing Americans recovering remains, and identifying remains.

Laos: Visit and discuss with Lao officials the question of Americans missing in Laos.

Paris: Visit and discuss with officials of the Vietnamese Embassies the question of Americans missing in North and South Vietnam and repatriation of known dead in their custody. Chairman Montgomery noted that reportedly contact with the Vietnamese was most feasible through their Paris Embassy.

It was suggested that Congressman Zablocki's Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs might have background information for the committee. Also considered was the investigation of all oral and written commitments which might have been made by the U.S. Government at the Paris peace accords. It was suggested that at least one staff member or consultant have experience in communicating with various governments and factions in Southeast Asia. Suggestions were made that testimony be received regarding the missing journalists, and that a statement be requested from the Department of Defense on the current status of MIA's and POW's.

Chairman Montgomery obtained concurrence of the select committee members to continue holding informal meetings at this time for the purpose of securing background information.

MEETING WITH SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER, NOVEMBER 14, 1975

All 10 select committee members attended 1½-hour working breakfast meeting with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. The members reported that the Secretary expressed a sincere desire to proceed on a basis of partnership with the legislative branch to resolve the problems surrounding persons still unaccounted for in Southeast Asia.

In response to the committee's questioning, Secretary Kissinger indicated that he approved the select committee's plan to proceed with discussions on its own with representatives of the Indochinese governments. He said an exchange of views on normalizing relations would be acceptable and that issues such as free travel, international trade, and economic aid should be discussed on their own merits and not relating to article 21 of the Paris agreement.

Secretary Kissinger pointed out that he saw no obstacle to the principle of reciprocating gestures made by the Southeast Asian nations.

He reported that the American Government was then in the process of making one such reciprocal move. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam had, on October 29, 1975, released nine American Civilians who had been taken prisoner in South Vietnam earlier in the year. In the interest of making a good will gesture in response to the release, the administration decided to license broader categories of assistance to the people of Vietnam by American church and humanitarian groups. (Public announcement of that gesture was later made by the select committee.)

Chairman Montgomery asked whether or not the Secretary believed the Indochinese nations held any live prisoners of war. The Secretary replied that he did not believe the Vietnamese held any, since there was no purpose for them to do so. He did not know about Laos, however. Dr. Kissinger went on to say that the Department of State had not received any hard information as the result of initiatives it has taken on behalf of possible POW's.

The Secretary of State commented that there is no reason not to normalize relations with the Vietnamese, stating that we cannot fight them over the next two decades. Normalization, he said, must come without submission to blackmail. He noted that relations with Vietnam were also predicated upon Vietnamese restraint in not flooding Southeast Asia with arms. The Secretary pointed out that the U.S. veto of DRV/PRG membership in the United Nations was not directed against Vietnam, but was made to uphold the right of deserving non-Communist nations, such as South Korea, to enter the United Nations.

Secretary Kissinger noted that in response to the select committee's request, President Ford had agreed to include a discussion of the MIA issue on his agenda for discussions in China.

DISCUSSIONS WITH VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS, PARIS, FRANCE, DECEMBER 6, 1975

INTRODUCTION

Eight members of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia, accompanied by four members of other committees of the Congress, met with Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) Ambassador Vo Van Sung, Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam (PRG) Chargé d'Affaires Huynh Thanh, and other Vietnamese officials at the DRV Embassy in Paris, on December 6.

The meeting comprised two sessions. This was the first time that an official American delegation had met with the Vietnamese since the cessation of hostilities.

The genesis of the Paris meeting lay in cablegrams sent by the House Select Committee to Ambassador Vo Van Sung and Chargé d'Affaires Huynh Thanh requesting that an informal meeting take place. The telegrams were dispatched to Paris on October 29, 1975. An exchange of telegrams and telephone calls during the month of November established the date, time, and modalities for the meeting. Vietnamese officials agreed to discuss with the Americans the question of missing

persons in Southeast Asia. The American delegation agreed to discuss whatever matters the Vietnamese considered important. It was made clear to the Vietnamese at the outset that the House Select Committee could neither establish foreign policy nor negotiate, but would report to appropriate agencies of the U.S. Government the views expressed by the Vietnamese.

GENERAL

The meeting commenced on December 6, 1975 at the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Paris, France. The Vietnamese officials included: Vo Van Sung, Ambassador of DRV; Huynh Thanh, Chargé d'Affaires of the PRG; Tran Hoan, Counselor of DRV Embassy; Phan Huy Thong, First Secretary of the DRV Embassy; Do Thanh, First Secretary of the DRV Embassy; Ngo Nguyen Phuong, Third Secretary of the DRV Embassy; and Professor Nguyen Ngoc Giao, translator.

Select committee members of the American delegation were: G. V. Montgomery, chairman, John J. Moakley, Patricia Schroeder, Richard L. Ottinger, Thomas Harkin, Paul N. McCloskey, Jr., Benjamin A. Gilman, and Tennyson Guyer.

Also participating were Congressmen Dante B. Fascell, (International Relations Committee), Jonathan B. Bingham (Chairman, Subcommittee on International Trade and Commerce), Robert Duncan (Appropriations Committee), and Kenneth L. Holland (Veterans Affairs Committee).

During the discussions, committee members and their associates stressed the interest of the American people in resolving the MIA issue. They also stressed the need for a continuing search for other missing Americans. Chairman Montgomery asked that American, third country, or international inspection teams be permitted to investigate crash and grave sites for the recovery of remains. Reference was made to the well-documented cases of missing Americans given to DRV Secretary Le Duc Tho by Secretary of State Kissinger in 1973. Those cases contained sufficient data to indicate that Vietnamese authorities should be able to account for the whereabouts, fate, or place of burial of each individual. Members stressed the importance of repatriating the remains of those Americans whose place of interment in Vietnam could be identified.

The committee members asked for the return of remains of two U.S. Marines killed in Saigon on April 30, 1975. The DRV Ambassador professed to have no direct knowledge of the case but stated that he would refer the request to his Government.

The question of emmigration from Vietnam of Americans and other foreign nationals was stressed. In addition, the exit from Saigon of Vietnamese dependents of American personnel was discussed. Ambassador Sung stated that no obstacle would be placed in the path of those wishing to leave South Vietnam.

The American delegation pointed out that grant aid to Vietnam was not likely. Ambassador Sung posed a question concerning the U.S. veto of United Nations membership for the Vietnams. He was informed that the veto was not aimed at Vietnam but rather was based on the principle of universality which demanded the admission of South Korea as well. When South Korea's admission to the United Na-

tions was blocked, the United States was compelled to veto the entry of North and South Vietnam.

The Vietnamese were courteous and friendly in their discussions with the Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia. They stressed normalization of relations and reconstruction of Vietnam. They also agreed to repatriate the remains of three U.S. pilots whose return had previously been interrupted by the U.S. veto of Vietnamese membership in the United Nations.

The Vietnamese promised to continue their research on missing Americans, including the remains of two U.S. Marines left in Saigon in April 1975. Ambassador Vo Van Sung claimed that the United States had demonstrated a hostile attitude since 1973 and that a change in the U.S. Government's attitude was prerequisite to good relations. He pointed out that the Vietnamese have a public relations problem. In order to gain the cooperation of local leaders and the population in efforts to locate American grave and crash sites, he stated that it would first be necessary to demonstrate that relations with the United States have improved.

The Ambassador said that no live American prisoners were held by North or South Vietnam. Committee members pressed the issue repeatedly asking about the possibility of Americans in any category being held by the Vietnamese. Ambassador Sung reiterated that all live American prisoners had been released. He also asserted that all competent organizations in Vietnam were continuing their research on the problem of missing Americans.

With respect to those American citizens stranded in South Vietnam and the fall of President Thieu's government, the Ambassador said they would be permitted to leave and the mechanism for their doing so had been established. The Ambassador also said he would advise his Government on American interest in obtaining information on Americans missing in Laos and Cambodia.

Ambassador Sung discussed the Paris Peace Accords with particular emphasis on Articles 8(b) "Accounting for Missing Americans" and 21 "Reconstruction of Vietnam." He stated that the Vietnamese were ready to normalize relations with the U.S. Government on the basis of the Paris Agreement and that the Vietnamese would fully carry out the provisions of Article 8(b). The Congressmen opined that from the American standpoint the Peace Agreement was no longer a viable document and progress should be made in the context of normalization.

DISCUSSIONS WITH RED CROSS OFFICIALS IN GENEVA, DECEMBER 7, 1975

The committee traveled to Geneva for informal discussions with officials of the International Commission of the Red Cross, Mr. Jean Pierre Hocke, Director of Operations, and Mr. Melchior Borsinger, Deputy General. Select committee members at the meeting included Chairman G. V. Montgomery and Representatives Moakley, Schroeder, Ottinger, Harkin, Gilman, and Guyer. Also participating were Congressmen Dante Fascell (of the International Relations Committee), Robert Duncan (of the Appropriations Committee), and Ken Holland (of the Veterans' Affairs Committee).

Members were informed of the ongoing operations of the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Indochina. At present, there is an ICRC representative in Hanoi, and officials expressed the hope that there would soon be a representative in Saigon. Messrs. Hocke and Borsinger discussed their work in facilitating the departure of foreign nationals and the dependents of foreign nationals from Saigon. They stated that in the coming months some action on this matter was likely. They also indicated that they were assisting in determining the needs for humanitarian assistance to both North and South Vietnam.

The Congressmen inquired about further kinds of assistance they might expect from the ICRC, both in Vietnam and in Laos and Cambodia. The Red Cross officials indicated that identification and repatriation of remains was well within their mandate and that they were prepared to assist in such activities if they received the approval of the respective Indochinese governments.

MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, DECEMBER 17, 1975

INTRODUCTION

The following members of the select committee met with the President of the United States on December 17, 1975: G. V. Montgomery, chairman of the Select Committee, Benjamin A. Gilman, and Paul N. McCloskey, Jr.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Montgomery noted that the committee had opened the door to meaningful action on the MIA issue by its December 6 Paris meeting. He noted that the discussions of the MIA issue had proceeded along with discussions of the normalization of Vietnamese-American relations.

The President stated that in order to help normalize relations and receive the good will of the United States, the Vietnamese would first have to demonstrate their good will through meaningful action on the MIA issue. He commented that the United States would move forward on the basis of reciprocity.

The President assured the committee members that he was interested in anything that could be done to alleviate the pain and suffering of POW/MIA families.

President Ford was pleased that the committee was going to Hanoi to receive the remains of three American pilots. He asked the members to make it clear to the Vietnamese that information was required concerning Americans still unaccounted for.

Mr. Ford assured the committee that any suggestions they might make would seriously be considered by the administration. He stated that he stood behind the remarks he had made in Hawaii when he articulated his Pacific doctrine. The committee was asked to inform the Vietnamese of the President's position. In addition, the President made it clear that he fully supports the efforts of the select committee.

The President next turned to a subject that concerned him with respect to the POW/MIA families. Apparently some unscrupulous per-

sons have been taking money from families on the pretext of obtaining information on missing personnel. The committee will investigate this situation at an early opportunity.

The subject of Vietnamese refugees was discussed briefly, and the President noted that only about 1,000 remain in the resettlement camps in the United States.

Committee members discussed Vietnamese interest in offshore oil exploration, oil drilling, and general business ventures. Mr. Ford showed considerable interest in the matter of oil exploration.

The committee informed the President that they had stressed to the Vietnamese in Paris that they were deeply interested in any information of possible live Americans, as well as beginning investigations of crashsites and gravesites throughout Indochina. They had also discussed the various cases of POW's and MIA's that have been provided to Indochinese officials over the past several years and their desire to obtain the fullest possible accounting in those cases. The President was informed that Ambassador Vo Van Sung had assured the committee that no obstacles would be placed in the way of those foreign nationals who wished to depart from Vietnam.

The President then discussed with Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft the possibility of providing Chairman Montgomery a letter setting forth the administration's position. The President's letter was delivered to Congressman Montgomery immediately prior to his departure for Hanoi.

REPORT ON DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS IN INDOCHINA, DECEMBER 21 AND 22, 1975

INTRODUCTION

Committee Chairman G. V. Montgomery (D-Miss.), and Representatives Paul N. McCloskey, Jr. (R-Calif.), Richard L. Ottinger (D-N.Y.), and Benjamin A. Gilman (R-N.Y.), traveled to Hanoi on December 21, 1975, to receive the remains of three American pilots killed during the war, and to confer with Premier Pham Van Dong and other officials of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). On December 6th, DRV Ambassador to France, Vo Van Sung, had promised release of these remains. Following the meetings in Hanoi, the congressional group traveled to Vientiane, Laos, where discussions were held with the Chief of the Cabinet of the Foreign Ministry, Sou-banh Srithirath.

GENERAL

Return of the remains of Lt. Comdr. Jesse Taylor, Jr. (Calif.), Lt. Col. Crosley James Fitton (Conn.), and Capt. Ronald Dwight Perry (Tenn.), had been the source of concern to members of the Select Committee and the administration. Arrangements for their recovery were interrupted by the U.S. veto of United Nations membership of North and South Vietnam. In December, 1975, DRV officials made known their intent to release the remains to the "families" of the deceased through the Select Committee, using the good offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Air transportation for the committee members and staff from Bangkok

to Hanoi and return was arranged by the UNHCR. The High Commissioner personally interceded with DRV officials and facilitated the 2 days of high level discussions that resulted.

RECEIPT OF REMAINS

Three wooden caskets were presented to the committee at Hanoi's Gia Lam airport. After examination of the well-preserved remains, the caskets were ceremoniously sealed by the Vietnamese. Legal receipts were executed, first by UNHCR representatives and then by Chairman Montgomery. A simple, but dignified, ceremony was conducted by the Congressmen as the flag-draped caskets were turned over to a uniformed American officer for escort to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Thailand.

MEETING WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER PHAN HIEN

Committee members remained in Hanoi for discussions with officials of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the most substantive of which were with Deputy Foreign Minister Phan Hien on December 21.

The Congressmen inquired whether the DRV had knowledge of live Americans being held anywhere in Indochina. Mr. Hien said he could only speak for Vietnam, but that all American prisoners had been returned in 1973.

Members of the Select Committee stressed the need for searching grave and crash sites, for receiving documentation on missing Americans, for recovering remains of known dead and specifically the last two Marines killed in Saigon, and for the desirability of establishing an American or third-country mission in Hanoi to assist the Vietnamese MIA agency. The salutary effect of expeditious action on the MIA issue was emphasized.

Mr. Hien stated that the Vietnamese are ready for negotiations, adding that progress on the MIA issue could best be achieved in an atmosphere of good will and normalization of Vietnamese-American relations. Citing the Paris agreement, he linked progress on article 8(b) (responsibilities toward missing persons) with article 21 (the U.S. contribution to healing the wounds of war). Noting that the government's first priority is to improve the living conditions of the Vietnamese people, he reviewed what he considered to be earlier American commitments to assist in the reconstruction of Vietnam through the Joint Economic Commission. He asked what substantive contributions the United States was now prepared to make to Vietnam.

The Congressmen indicated that discussion of new agreements, rather than of article 21, would hasten normalized relations. They pointed out the improbability of any grant in aid for Indochina and suggested that it would be more realistic to pursue movement in areas such as trade, technical assistance, oil exportation, diplomatic recognition, health care and humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Hien discussed specific forms of aid needed and wanted, which included engineering and construction materials and assistance in oil exploration and development. He declined offers of direct American or third party efforts to investigate grave and crash sites, emphasizing that if the local people cannot find crash sites, no one can. He added that gathering MIA information is difficult and depends heavily on lo-

cal conditions and public opinion. Mr. Hien said information regarding the two Marines in Saigon was recently conveyed to Senator Kennedy in a letter from the DRV Foreign Minister. In response to the committee's request, he promised to inquire into the case of Mr. Leonard Judson, an American at the Red Cross building in Saigon, who is going blind. The Deputy Minister also agreed to accept a list of American citizens in South Vietnam who wish to leave.

MEETING WITH PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG

Members of the Select Committee met on December 22, 1975, with Premier Pham Van Dong at the Presidential Palace. The Congressmen stressed the importance of resolving the MIA issue as a means of bringing the two countries together. They drew attention to the President's Pacific Doctrine and letter to Chairman Montgomery. Both expressed a willingness to act reciprocally. Gestures already made by both sides were discussed, and the committee urged that another gesture relative to MIA's be made within a few weeks. Several representative files, selected at random, were turned over to DRV officials. The committee carried several randomly-selected individual POW/MIA case summaries. Each summary showed a picture of the missing individual and reflected pertinent details of the incident of loss. These summary sheets were turned over to and accepted by DRV officials.

Premier Pham Van Dong also stressed the importance of reciprocal gestures. He questioned why normalization of relations and reconstruction should be delayed. Showing some appreciation of American public opinion, he urged the Select Committee to use its influence to induce the U.S. Government to help heal the wounds of war. Throughout the meeting, the Premier stressed the willing cooperation and good will of the Vietnamese people and the strong hope for normalization of relations. He said he looked forward to a future of close U.S.-Vietnamese relations.

MEETING WITH LAO CHIEF OF CABINET, SOUBANH SRITHIRATH

On December 23, 1975, members of the Select Committee met in Vientiane, Laos, with Mr. Soubanh Srithirath, Chief of Cabinet of the Foreign Ministry.

Select Committee members stressed the importance of settling the MIA issue. Mr. Soubanh was presented with five cases concerning U.S. personnel known to have been alive in Lao hands. He was asked for an accounting of these and other missing Americans. The case of "Spectre 17" was also presented. This case involves about thirteen Americans, believed to have been killed in an aircraft crash in Laos in 1972. Their bodies have not yet been recovered, and several are believed to have been interred at the crash site.

Mr. Soubanh stated that all live Americans held in Laos were returned in 1973 and that no American MIA's are, or could be, alive in Laos. He indicated that the Lao have initiated searches for their own MIA's and in the process would also search for American MIA's, passing information to the United States as it is obtained. He expressed the Lao desire for American assistance but stated that an organization like USAID would not be welcome.

APPENDIX

MATERIAL RECEIVED FOR THE RECORD

EXCERPTS FROM THE STATEMENT OF LCDR GEORGE THOMAS COKER, APPEARING
BEFORE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: LCDR George Thomas Coker is presently assigned to the
Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, Pacific, Naval Air Station, North Island, San
Diego, Calif.]

OCTOBER 27, 1973.

LCDR G. T. Coker offered to appear to express his opinions based on his
experience as a POW in Hanoi concerning MIA's.

Members of the Board of Directors of the National League of Families present
included: Ms. Iris Powers, Chairman; Mrs. Maerose Evans, Mr. Scott Albright,
Mrs. Mariann Shelton, Col. Earl Hopper, Mr. George Shine, Mrs. Norma Mitchell,
Mr. Mitchell Sadler, Col. Robert Brett, Mrs. Nancy Perisho, Gen. Edward White,
Mrs. Bertha Estes, Mr. John Coker and Mr. George Brooks.

Also present: Capt. Mark Smith, U.S. Army; many League members and
invited guests.

Commander COKER. First of all, what are my credentials? Well, in one respect,
none. I am here today not as a member or a representative of the State Depart-
ment or the President or DOD; or the Navy. I'm here representing only myself.
I can't even represent the POWs officially. Keep that in mind.

I'll try to point out when I am saying something that's strictly my opinion,
especially if it's a controversial opinion. However, at the same time, I think I
can say that I have an unofficial type of credential, which is, that I do repre-
sent, I think, a consensus of opinion. And by consensus I mean that somebody's
going to disagree with me on every single thing I say. If you want to look around
and find them, you'll be able to get 100 percent contradiction.

But I do represent a consensus. I know the general POW feeling very well, and
I know I speak for that group, although I cannot officially say "this is the POW
policy," because there's no such thing.

I have talked to people in the Navy and the Air Force, and to a great extent,
the Army, the DOD representatives, and to the State Department. I know their
attitudes. And again I think I can speak as a consensus of opinion—I'm putting
a lot of things together; I'm sure you've heard all of this before, but not quite in
the way I intend to present it today.

So that is my credential; it's purely unofficial, but I can guarantee that I do
speak for a consensus.

How did I get some of these credentials, especially in speaking for POW's? And
particularly in areas where you say, "Well, gee, he was never there." Well, I can
give you this little bit of factual type of data: There is nothing that took place in
the POW system that I am unaware of. I'm not the only person who can say that;
but there are not too many who can.

It's a series of strange situations; some of it being classified, such as intelli-
gence sources that I cannot really discuss, but I can tell you there was no com-
munication system that I was not included in on. There is no type of informa-
tion that went back and forth between, say, one squadron commanding officer
and another that I am not aware of. This doesn't mean that I can automatically
recall every single bit of it, but I know what happened. And as I say, there are
not a whole lot of guys who can say that; I'm just one of those.

One of the technical areas I can get into in order to substantiate this, is "mem-
ory bank" terms. What is a memory bank? I'd like to explain this to you, to en-
able you to understand what our, what you might call "credibility factor" would
be in areas that we think we have intelligence. Or in general, just how the POWs
operate; why can they say things and come up with what we call "data?"

First of all, our "memory banks" was our method of retaining information
that we wanted to know. We didn't have pencil and paper, we had no libraries, so
the only way we could keep information is simply to memorize it verbatim, and

make sure it stayed memorized without any kind of change, and this meant that changes could not take place over seven years.

To you people, you should view that as being almost an impossible task. If you'd have asked me that seven years ago, I would have agreed with you. But sometimes under pressure you have to do things that you never would have considered even possible.

One area that the memory banks were used in an unofficial capacity [which would only show you what you can do when you really want to or have to] was the way we used it in education.

I think the best example of this would be our dictionaries. We had dictionaries up there long before we had paper and pencil, at least legally, or any that we could hold on to for a very long period of time. So what we did was memorize vocabulary.

I learned French, and memorized over 1,000 French words before I ever spoke a word of French. I'd never studied in my life, but yet I had over a thousand words memorized alphabetically by French.

You say that's impossible? Well, it is until you have to do it, but that's the only way we're going to retain information. I'm not unique there. A lot of guys have had memory bank items like that.

Do you know why I explained that? To let you know how hard we worked on areas that we were concerned with. And the area that we were primarily concerned with; absolutely number one, even before policies and certainly before education items, were names.

Any name we got hold of, by any source, was retained in our memory banks. And there are people—I'm not so sure they can still do it today, because you can see what you have to do to maintain that instant recall, but when we came home, there were quite a few people who could rattle off 600 POW names, alphabetically, as fast as you could listen to them: Abbott, Will; Abbott, Joe; Abbott, Bob—and so on, right down the line. Every single POW.

You might say, well, how did we drop names or add names? It's a real valid question. When we got together in 1971 in a large group, we had about 350 living POWs; we had lost about 25, but we had over 500 names. And we established exactly what names were good, or where they came from.

We tracked down the source, we found out how they got the name, how many people heard it. We spent not just hours or days, but weeks and weeks of trying to make sure with every chance we had to totally consolidate our intelligence, to know exactly where each name came from or how it came about, to determine what was good and what was bad.

We also came up with guys who had come in from a multiple aircraft and say, "Okay, my RO, my pilot, my BN, three guys, EWO's, from the B-66 didn't make it," or at least, "Have you heard about them?" So we carried all these names, and later we determined: Who brought it in? Where did it come from? And then we put those in a separate category. Those were people who were in an aircraft that was shot down. Don't confuse them with ourselves, at least, with the people that have made it to the POW system.

There are people, although it was not their job, and they cannot give you instant recall alphabetically, but if you give them the last name of the guys in our memory bank, he can tell you that guy's first name, the aircraft he flew, the date he was shot down, and his rank.

Why did we do that? Because if you think you're concerned with names, let me tell you: We were a lot more concerned up there in 1966, 7 and 8. We did not know if we were going to come home together, and we wanted to make sure that if some people went home they wouldn't forget about the rest of us. So if you wondered, did the POWs forget? If you feel that way, you're wrong.

We were not just thinking about MIAs or POWs, we were thinking about us. We worked hard to make sure we had those names, had them memorized perfectly, and knew the source. The only factor that they debriefed us on when we got to Clark AFB were names. Everything else they put off, and I think you'd agree, Operation Homecoming was tremendous. They got us home to our families faster than we thought would be possible.

So we've got the names. If it existed in the POW system, we got it, and we brought it home, and we didn't forget anybody. And as I said, that wasn't because of any humanitarian concept. We were thinking of ourselves.

This was the first item of business anywhere we went, all the time.

Precisely what do I want to do here today? I'm going to try to share with you a lot of stories. I think a good number of them you will be familiar with, and you

might even be able to recognize a particular story—and you know the guy's name. I am leaving the names out. Not that it's a big supersecret, but it's not necessary.

I'm going to put a lot of them together to try to give you a picture of what it was like to be, not only a POW in North Vietnam, but what Southeast Asia's like from an aviator's point of view. And we learned a lot of other things besides aviation up there, but I'm going to start back, not when I was shot down, but before I was shot down, and the reports that came in. And hopefully after an hour or two of this, you will be able to comprehend in a small way what it's like to be flying in combat, to be shot down, to be captured, to try and survive, and some day to come home as a POW.

Let's start off with flying in combat, period—a guy gets shot down. How do reports start? What are the difficulties of gaining a good report, and ultimately giving a family good information concerning the guy that was just shot down; whether he's KIA, MIA, POW or whatever.

The first thing you have to understand is, it's very difficult, sometimes, to ascertain information. I think the best example in all the world was my reaction to a woman's statement—I think it was in the League, or at least I was reading a League or a VIVA notice—and she was complaining about the fate of her husband. And her comment was, "There must be more information; the wingman was right there, and they must be holding something back."

Well, I'm sorry—I laughed. A wingman doesn't know everything. The thing you have to understand is we're flying around up there, at 400, 500, 600 miles an hour—well actually those are knots, so start adding about 15 percent to put it into miles an hour—to put it in a way that you might be able to picture a little better, we're flying around a mile every 5, 6, 7, or 8 seconds, depending on just how fast you're going.

Three seconds go by; that's 3,000 yards. You can't look at your leader all the time, nor can a leader particularly look at his wingman. All hell is breaking loose over there. There's junk coming up from the ground; anything from "37" up to "85"; there may be SAM's in the air; there may be MIGs in the air, you're trying to follow the wing, you're looking for a target, there's clouds in the air you're trying to dodge, you're trying to navigate, everybody's talking on the radio—and you expect me to tell you exactly what happened on that plane next to me all the time, when all I have to do is take my eyes away for 2 seconds, and we just travelled a quarter of a mile.

Speed is a big factor, and that's hard to understand; it's hard even for an aviator to understand sometimes—this is going to be the source of an awful lot of bad reporting—not deliberately, but because it's hard to picture what happened that quick. You just don't know. Or what you think you know is erroneous.

To begin with, you're scared. Nobody goes over there very calmly, you know, no sweat or anything, flying around when there is nothing but 57's coming up at him all the time. I tell you, you're really frightened; you're frightened to the core.

There's a heck of a lot of frustration. If you think this was a long, ugly war; we knew it too. Back there in 1965 and 1966 when we were flying it was frustrating. And probably more frustrating for us, because we were being told we can't hit targets when we can look there and see them, or MIG's can run out and attack us, and run back in a circle that is mystically drawn around Hanoi.

We are tired, we are frightened, we are frustrated, we are ticked off, and we get up there in the air and you expect us to see everything perfectly when we're moving around at 500 miles an hour. It just doesn't work that way.

To begin with, to show how an aviator can exaggerate, and most of us do quite liberally, is that, you start flying around, you see all this junk coming up, and suddenly "37" is going to be reported as "57"; you have "57" it will be reported as "85." If you have a real close call with an "85," you might come back and say that was a SAM.

Now you say, how can a guy make that kind of a mistake? Well, I won't tell you how, but I'll guarantee you one thing: it happened. By the time they finished reporting on Nam Dinh, after the flights over there in mid-1966, Nam Dinh was covered with little blue pins, which meant those were all "85" gun emplacements.

I've flown over Nam Dinh at night. When they shot up that 37 with all the tracers, that place glowed. You would have thought there was a huge bonfire. No way somebody could fly through there. More, it can be done because I did it several times. But I know there wasn't that much 85; there was a lot of 37.

Because 37 sends up tracer; 85 has exploding shells, you've got these big puns in the air all over the place. They both will light the air up, but they look different. But a guy comes back and all he knows is all hell was up there in the air, so what is it? 85, the most terrifying thing in the world, unless it's a SAM.

That's erroneous reporting. And that's part of the problem of being an aviator in the air. An intelligence person, trying to gather information and present a logical report—the first thing you have to do is cut everything an aviator says in half. And then you might be within 10 percent of what the truth is, depending on how scared he was that day.

This becomes a real problem. You can get the information, either good or bad, depending on your point of view; it can go in both directions. This info comes back out and, "I absolutely swear beyond any shadow of a doubt that that crew was in that aircraft." I saw it hit—for instance, by SAM or 85 or 57—and I saw it go into the mountain or I saw it crash into the ground. "No hope. They went in with the plane; zero; he's dead."

The ejection sequence takes place in 2 seconds. From the time he pulls that curtain, he will be in a deployed chute in 2 seconds. Now, as soon as that chute pops, he's stopping in the air relative to me; he's not coming to a dead stop, but he's got a parachute slowing him down. I'm going forward, in 2 seconds, a quarter of a mile. He's slowed down now perhaps just 100 yards of forward travel.

I'm looking at that plane, watching him—I see this huge explosion. My first instinct, if I'm close to him, is to break away from him; he's liable to wipe me out, too. Then there's more SAM's coming this way, somebody's screaming "MIG's over here," we're talking on the radio, this guy's kicking me saying, "Hey, look at the radar. What the hell's going on?" I'm pushing the throttle—flying faster.

Meanwhile, we look back, the plane's coming unglued, we glance away from it, the guys eject, they hit the chute and drop behind us. We're over here, now, their plane's going into the ground—no hope. But back there, inside of a 2 second period that we weren't looking at them, two good chutes go down. That's happened.

Not that it happened exactly that way, but we have reports where guys were absolutely dead, beyond a shadow of a doubt; no hope, and presto, we've got two live POW's.

Now what happens the other way? We're going along and we can report that we think we saw two good chutes. What happens when a guy's up there again, whistling around like Dixie, and maybe there's only one chute.

One chute starts coming down, he's breaking like crazy; comes back—he may see the same chute again and claims then that he saw two. So now you may very well have a guy who was blown to smithereens inside the cockpit, but the report comes back that there are two chutes.

So this little erroneous reporting can go either way. In short, you miss many things that were obvious if you had your eyes open at the right second. You see things that did not happen. And you don't see things that did happen. The biggest reason is speed, time. Nobody's lying; nobody's making up anything; we just didn't see it, or we did not see it correctly. Because things were happening too fast for us to be able to interpret everything properly.

You want to know, right now, what happened. A plane was shot down. You know, too, from very unfortunate experiences right here, that the grapevine, as in any other place in the world, is going hot. If we don't get a word back to you within 24 hours, you're going to be notified, maybe by the press. We try to avoid that for your sake, and I think you appreciate that.

But now, in the tremendous haste to get that report back, it goes back "One chute sighted. Nothing else to report." So, what's the presumptive finding at the moment? Just tentatively, you know, "Probably one POW and one MIA."

An hour later the wingman lands, comes down to get the full debrief—"There were two chutes."

What's this guy going to do now? A report has gone in to immediately give those people some knowledge of what's going on. Now they know they've made a mistake; something's wrong. Now they're going to slow down and he cautions for a second. They're not going to fly back another report, because they've already made a mistake once; they don't know which one it is.

So they sit on it for 2 days, studying it, trying to find out what's going on so they can come up with some kind of a decent report.

So, 2 or 3 days later, back comes the report: "Status change. Two chutes sighted." The first thing my big brother did was just hit the ceiling, because he

wanted to know what the new information was. He stayed on those people's backs for, at least, the next 2 or 3 months, giving his CACO hell. And what can that poor guy say? "We made a mistake?" "Yes, I guess we did."

Why did we make the mistake? Because of pressures—and where did the pressure come from ultimately? I'm not really blaming anyone. I just want you to know: how does that mess start?

A lot of people are pressured. A lot of people are frustrated. In a case up there in the air, you're frightened to death; you try to see things that it's almost humanly impossible to see. In fact, a lot of the answers are, "I don't know. I didn't see it."

If a man demands an answer, and we could not give you a reasonable answer, sometimes then—to put it short—answers are made up. They weren't really edited and made up, but slowly you can see how a story may come out where, in fact, the end result is that they are almost made up.

That doesn't happen in every case. However, it does happen in many cases, but not to say a majority. I would say every case has some little defect in it that you will never be able to determine. All I am trying to tell you is that you have to be suspicious of those things—not because anybody is doing anything deliberately—I can guarantee you that they're not doing it maliciously, or viciously. They're trying to help you and give you a complete report as soon as possible. And we simply cannot do that sometimes.

In World War II you would have come back and said, "So-and-so is MIA. That's all we have"—and you would have no recourse. Usually they would wait 2 or 3 months for details. I'm not saying that's the right way to do it, but maybe it would have been better.

This time they were breaking their backs to try to accommodate everybody, including you people—and including my dear beloved parents—but in the process of trying to do that, sometimes you made mistakes. If you appreciate that problem, you can see right from the very beginning—before I ever became a POW—you've got problems. That's all you have to remember; you're going to have problems.

Some other reports that are kind of interesting—this will get more into how difficult it is to become a POW when you are shot down—I think we can observe in the air what happens in a parachute. We have seen people being shot at in a parachute; not once or twice, but many, many times. Most POW's if they are conscious about what is going on around them while they are coming down—and that's not too often, because you are in shock most of the time—saw this stuff coming up. This is going to lead into, you know, how many people are killed that way? We saw people shot dead in their chutes—but, again—there is a slight chance here that you could get a bad report again.

If you are flying around very close to that guy and you're watching him—and he may be on the radio talking to you—you can see the junk going up all around him. He sees it. He's probably screaming bloody murder at you on the radio. You see his arms up here, he may be holding the risers, and suddenly he goes limp in the chute and no more radio transmission. The guy was shot dead in his chute. That's our report, and it's probably pretty darn accurate—but there is a possibility we could have been wrong.

Or what actually might be the reverse of that, I suppose, would be that we see that chute going down all the way, and we're not quite that close, and we might not see all the dirty stuff—especially in the daytime because a tracer doesn't light it up that much unless there is a heavy concentration of it—that he might very well have been hit, but to our eyes, we were close, we saw two chutes go out, we might have had radio contact with him, we're fairly close and actually see what appears to be two bodies in chutes. Then as you're breaking back and forth you get a little bit further away, the guys are hit shortly before getting to the ground. The report comes back, "Two good chutes—two guys on the ground." Again, you just can't see that stuff all the time.

I think of one that is a lot more vivid—at least it is to me—a completely false report is when you see a chute "being lugged into the woods." I don't know how many of you here might even have a report about that concerning your particular missing man. That is taught to us in survival and it's going to be a natural aviator's report, because what is taught to us in survival is that "when you get down on the ground, if you can, you bundle up your chute and any other gear, and you hightail it and see if you can't dispose of it and bury it, because you don't want to leave the trace of where you are."

That makes good sense. That's good, sound training and I so support that idea. So, what happens? I'm flying rescap, and I come along, and the guy just went down, you see where he landed, and all of a sudden you see the chute being dragged very quickly into some brush or some woods on the side, and that's the last visual contact you have. Well, I call in a "SAR," the rescue people saying, "He just dragged his chute into the woods," you know, "he's still free. Get the SAR people in here." We've also lost a lot of helicopters and more people up there, both POW's and MIA's, and KIA's because the SAR's were launched just from that information.

Well, after being there and seeing what happened, actually the opposite is happening: because when you come down in that situation, it's very rare that they don't know where you are; they're usually all around you. Well, at that point you're not interested in hiding that parachute because they already know where you are. All that thing is now is heavy baggage. You're not going to worry about that chute. If you are free, you're going to get out of that chute and run as fast as you can to get to the woods and to try to hide yourself and try to get a SAR outfit in there. You're certainly not going to pick up that parachute and take it with you. So, if there are enemy on the ground and they are giving you problems as a rescue team, that same enemy is going to tell that guy the second he's coming down that he's not going to monkey with that parachute. When his feet touch the ground he's going to snap off the release and get out of there.

So what happens? Why is the chute being dragged into the woods? Well, that's pretty obvious. A parachute is very easily spotted from the air. There are a lot of things that aren't so easy to see, but a great, big, white, round circle on the ground, particularly if it's laid out, is very easy to spot.

The North Vietnamese are not that dumb, they know if you can see that chute you're going to be there and you're going to be shooting it up, and they don't like airplanes; they don't like them one damn bit. So what are they going to do? They're going to get that chute, they're going to ball it up and get into the woods as fast as they can and hide it, because as soon as the chute is gone, hopefully, the airplanes will get out of there.

So if the report comes in to me—and I have seen many, many reports like this—and by "many," if I want to throw a number in there I'll try to grab at one—but let's say a couple of dozen, at least—if you tell me a chute goes into the woods, my assumption is the man is a POW or dead. Their assumption at the time: he's still free, and they call in a rescue team; and that may be in the report. At that time, very logical, maybe; but they just didn't understand at that point of the game.

It may give you reason to say, "Well, he's alive, and he's still evading on the ground," if that's the case, today I'm going to tell you that he's not a POW; he's dead, because he's not free. These are going to be the contradictions you're going to have to face. You're going to have to go back and look at it with that understanding and say, "Now what do I think now?" A complete reversal of thinking—and it would be a reversal of mine because I was one of those aviators who would have given that type of report. But now it is totally the reverse because I understand the situation a little bit better.

I think that pretty well covers a lot that goes into bad reports. I think the biggest thing to remember is that often people were asking what were reasonable questions, but there were no reasonable answers, so that the demand for answers led to answers that now are unreasonable.

Keep in mind that aviators are tired, frustrated, ticked off, just as upset as you are, and to top it off, they're scared within an inch of their life. They're operating under a tremendous amount of pressure; they're going at high rates of speed, and they simply cannot give you the type of information you want. They are going to give you erroneous information, not deliberately, but because they simply did not see it, or they think they saw something that didn't take place. If you can appreciate that, you can appreciate that reports can be a little bit fouled up.

The second big area to keep in mind with that is that it was not done maliciously, viciously, or with any intent to hurt people. As a matter of fact, I think a lot of it was done from a very charitable point of view.

Back to reports, and how you can actually get a downright erroneous report, there are a couple of very true stories that I can give you. One I think you have heard before:

A guy is flying, he does see his wingman shot down. Two guys go in, and they're deader than a doornail. He's thinking to himself, "If I report that they're dead, the wife's going to be brokenhearted, she'll get death gratuities, and that's it." If I report him MIA, his pay keeps going, and it will cushion the blow for a little while.

Well, that's not being done because the guy's trying to hurt anybody. He didn't know this was going to last for 7 years, we didn't and you didn't. He was trying to be a nice guy. Lo and behold, it ends up that that's not being very nice. That is a one-shot affair. I can't say that happened a lot—but you can see again where you might get a totally erroneous report.

Try to track it down, just picture if that were you. You've got the report that, "It's his wingman. This is the guy that saw exactly what happened." He comes back and gives you a detailed report and tells you, "Your husband was shot down. I saw the plane go down, but there's a real good chance he might have gotten out of it. He's MIA."

Now, I come back 6 years later. You know all of the stories, the different reports, the conflicting stories: this guy tells you that; that guy tells you something else; you talk to the other people here, they've got conflicting stories, and now I come back and say, "Your husband flew right into the ground. I saw him."

What are you going to believe? You're faced with, "Well, yes, here's one more guy. He really knows. Oh, yeah? Well, get lost, buddy."

Where are you left? Exactly where you were before I showed up. It's very simple if I just give you one story and then seven years later we forget everything that happened and I give you a second story and explain it to you. Now, after all that you have heard, and all the frustration and all the pain that you've been through for seven years, if I come back and give you that story you probably will not believe it. You are faced with the situation of, "What the hell can I believe?" I don't have an answer for that, except you have to take whatever you think is the most valid report. The best way to go about it, that I can see is that you have to go back and try to get, "What were people telling me at the time? What were their motives?" Try to read out what was bad, and hopefully what's left over might be some pretty good stuff.

Again, it wasn't done because they were trying to hurt you. This guy was trying to be a very charitable person, and he was trying to do a wife, or a mother, or father, a big favor—and with that, all reports were optimistic. I think I can go around this table and ask every single person, and that's what it will be: "Stiff upper lip. Be cheerful. He'll probably come back. Don't give up hope." This is a very natural, human, charitable thing to do. You do it for your next door neighbor when so-and-so had a car accident and they're in the hospital today. "Oh, he's not going to die. He'll be okay. He'll be back home next week."

Well, that's fine. That's wonderful—but, in fact, he's deader than a doornail. Now, how do they come back again later and tell you he's dead?

Now, your attitude is not built on information—and, consequently, I'm not going to change it with new information. Your attitude was developed because of your own desire to have hope, and because of a lot of other people who were trying to be very kind to you. If we had it all to do again, I think we'd do it the same way. If we didn't, we'd be like the communist barbarians that live in Vietnam; but we try to be nice to each other. We're just plain, decent, kind people. Sometimes that backfires, and it backfired a lot.

This happened again, a very particular case I know, coupled with an erroneous report. Pilots don't like to say a lot of things, especially when they make mistakes. They don't always outright lie, but they conveniently forget, or conveniently generalize.

Well, a guy was shot down—it was a two-place aircraft—and there is a very definite sequence of how you are supposed to go out. I had a talk with this particular pilot as soon as he got back. He was banged up. I got a report from him in a very personal way, kind of like a senior officer just kind of crying in his beer to a junior officer. He was very upset, worrying about his crewman who did not make it. Strangely enough, the skipper went into that room after I did, and I did not find out until a few months ago that the official report was, well, "First he went out and then I went out, and I saw his chute in the air."

That's a lie, as far as I'm concerned. Maybe I got the wrong story, but as far as I am personally concerned, that guy was speaking to me right off the cuff. He wasn't trying to hide anything. If he was going to hide it, it would have been from the official report, not from me. You may say why? I don't think he was

doing it maliciously, but he thought he made a mistake. I don't think he did, actually. He did the only natural, decent, intelligent thing to do, but because of the way that we are brainwashed in aviation, I think he gave a downright false report. In either case, we don't know what happened to the guy. I can't absolutely say one way or the other. In short, we just don't know if he got out of the airplane. I, personally, don't think he ever got out of the plane; he went into the water with it.

Now, couple that with the guys that come back and say, "Come on, gal, hang in there." That's like getting conflicting reports, and they'll get mishmashed, and finally I see her 7 years later—he happened to be a good friend of mine—and I found out what all she had been told, and I said, "Are you ready for the real story?"

Well, she had already pretty well accepted the fact that her husband was dead. I gave her the story, but by the time she had gotten all this stuff piled up, and the way it went through her mind and the attitude that was there, that when I gave her the story it was as though she had two different stories. That's nobody's fault, and it's nobody's intent to be mean or nasty. A guy was scared; again, he twisted the truth a little bit, and everybody tried to be nice to her, and it ends up 7 years later being a very unfortunate situation. Hopefully, totally corrected today, but it's a problem.

Other types of false reports that delve into the aviation philosophy—and this I will get into again later—how your husband disappeared. Not just so much the report, but actually what did happen, is that you have a lot of problems in the air. It's very easy to kill yourself. Even in peacetime it's easy to do. All those things that you can do wrong are drilled into your mind as being "bad boy" type things. "You know, if you fly into the ground you're dumb, you're stupid. You don't do that." You know, "You don't go into a spin. You don't get vertigo. If you do that, you're a bum aviator."

The reason we do that isn't because you're really dumb for doing it; but because you try to psych yourself. You try to make yourself so alert to that, that you don't do it, because it's the easiest thing in the world to do. I know, because I damn near flew into the ground with Jack. It just so happened in that case it wasn't the pilot that figured it out, it was me, and I had to lean over and belt him one at 2,000 feet and yank the stick—we cleared the ground at about 50 feet. That's not the only time that's happened. That's happened to—I'd venture to say, although you would never get statistics because no aviator would admit it to you—I would venture to say that over 50 percent of aviators that are alive have damn near flown into the ground. They're not going to tell you about it because if you do, you're a dumb aviator.

Now, put me in that position, and I come back and I just saw your son fly into the ground. Do you think I'm going to tell you that? Hell, no, because the way I think, if I tell you your son got target fixation and flew into the ground, to my way of thinking, what I would be saying to you is, "You know, what you had for a son is a real idiot." That's not true, so what am I going to say?

"Well, he flew down, and he probably lost control, he was probably hit by a 57 or something and lost control of the aircraft and went in." But I'm not going to say, "I think he had target fixation." I don't have the guts to do that, I'm sure, because to my way of thinking—not to yours—I have just called your son an idiot.

So what are we going to do? We're going to twist the report. But now I've given you a shred of hope. It's not an out-and-out false report. I told you he flew into the ground, but I just twisted "why." So now he has the option of ejecting. Well, if I tell you he had target fixation, what you do if you have target fixation is, you are just going to freeze there; you're hypnotized. You're going to fly right smack into the ground, almost right into your target.

If that's the case, there's no way he's going to eject. If he's going to eject, he didn't have target fixation—but by telling you it's something else, now there's that opportunity, "He could have ejected. Something else might have happened."

The thing we have to remember—but we can't go back and remember it at the time, maybe—is that it is not wrong, because that's the way aviators are trained. This leads again to some false reports. Flying into the ground is an absolute no-no in aviation. I would venture to say that from all of the missing and all of the POW's, and everything else, you won't come up with more than two or three examples of where somebody said, "He had target fixation." I can give you dozens where a guy flew into the ground, if not target fixation, it's the other big no-no, and that's disorientation, whether it's vertigo, or whether it's just

plain being lost. And again I got a firsthand story on this—it happened in Laos, which is one of the real key areas right now.

He was flying along in what we call "broken"; that is, at least 50 percent cloud cover. You're up there, and it's puffy stuff, it's not just a layer, which is actually a lot easier—but puffy stuff that has elevation to it. He's in the mountains, and he's trying to get to the target which is underneath that junk. Well, Laos, some of you now have probably seen it for yourself, is filled with karst. This is a formation which if you haven't seen it, is going to be difficult to describe. You have just this rock mountain, very rugged, very jagged, that suddenly, out of nowhere, springs into the sky for 1,000 or 2,000 feet, maybe more. You may have a whole bunch of this around whether you have a mountain ridge, or an entire bunch of mountains of this karst. You can see rolling hills or mountains—with peaks and valleys. They're very irregular, and there's no way to predict where it is. If a cloud happened to be sitting right in front of it, you may think that's a valley right there, and, bang, there you are, right into a door. Again, I can't tell you that because, "If you do that, you are a pretty dumb aviator." But, in reality, that's easy to do, especially when you start compounding it with the other problems you have. This particularly applies to Laos, because it is mountainous, it has the karst, and the elevation is up there. A lot of times, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 feet.

You have two altimeters in the aircraft. One is a radar altimeter, which reads altitude off the ground. The other is a pressure altimeter. Well, you're supposed to watch the pressure altimeter to a great extent because that's where you really are. If you are out there, say, over the panhandle of North Vietnam, South Vietnam, up over Hanoi, out over the water, any peacetime flying, most of the time these two altimeters read the same, and it's very easy to learn to just watch one, particularly the radar altimeter. This is a bad, bad habit, and one, again, for which we psych ourselves all the time. "Don't do it." We probably hear this at least once a week. "And if you do, you're an idiot. Bad dog."

I'm not going to tell you if I think this happened, but this is a real problem.

Now you take all these things: the possibility of him being a POW, and you look at it honestly, one, he flew into the ground. I am 99.9 percent sure he has gone into the ground, and I don't even have to know the details to say it. And, two, if you say, "Okay, he ejected, or ejected at the last second," I'm saying that the best he has maybe is a 50 to 10 percent opportunity of getting a safe ejection.

Now, what happens after that? If he does have a safe ejection, we'll continue to take away his odds—but I'll get into that in a minute.

You can see now why an aviator may give, not an erroneous report, but will not exactly tell you the truth; and you're never going to get that true report now. It's way too late, yet, one gives you a little bit of hope, but if they came right out and said what had happened, the guy would have probably been put in KIA immediately. Laos was not a very nice place to be flying in.

One other story now that will lead into the body problems of KIA's, and then we'll get into what it's like to try to be a POW. I will tell it as though I was there, but I got it second-hand from a guy who saw it happen:

Two choppers are flying along. He's watching the chopper in front of him, and suddenly the chopper is hit by ground fire, and the thing just erupts into a great big ball of flame. It immediately crashes with however many people are aboard, 7, 8, 10. They tried to get a crew in there right away, and when they got there all they found was ash. You know, there was nothing there. And, once again—MIA—because there is no body.

Now, are those guys alive? Is there a chance that they are POW's? This has nothing to do with the VC, or the commies up north, or anything else. The guys burned up in the air, in about 2 seconds, but we don't have a body. And just imagine that poor gal's frustration later when one guy comes back, and tries to be optimistic, "Yeah, we saw this big ball of flame but it was right next to the ground. He might have jumped out. You never can tell."

Another guy comes back and says, "Boy, there's no hope at all," and, again, what is she going to believe? She wants to hope that her husband is alive, but what is she going to believe? In fact, there is a big separation between the stories. One of the first things she is going to say is, "Well, what's the new information? What did you see?"

He's going to tell her exactly the same story the other guy saw: it just erupted in a great big ball of fire.

Well, now you say why in the hell do you do things like that? In short, this isn't exactly true, but it almost got to the point that if there was not a body, there's no

KIA. Now, actually, that's not true. If they got an example like this, normally—if they've got a lot of guys to substantiate the report—something really solid like this, they would write the guys off as KIA. They were extremely reluctant to do this. The reason is because if you think you have problems, or if you think you give us problems—and by that I mean the State Department and DOD—that isn't anything like what happens when you call a guy KIA and he shows up alive. That doesn't mean we don't want it to happen, but all hell breaks loose: insurance; the gal has remarried, and God knows what else—and, boy, I'm telling you, they're just all over us with everything they have and they just tear us to shreds.

Again, put yourself in our shoes. Okay, I just went in with three aviators, you know, these great guys who are absolutely God's gift to the world, swear that guy is dead. Two months later he's alive, and I'm torn to ribbons by everybody in the chain of command.

This time they come back and say, "Honest to God, boy, I saw him go in."

"Baloney. You give me the body and I'll tell his wife he's dead. Until then, uh-uh, not me."

Now, that is not absolute; that was not a policy, but it came pretty damn close to that. As a result, I think we could have been more objective in some respects and called a lot of guys KIA. But because, again, the frustration, the fact that this war was so wide open, that everybody got to know everything that was going on, the policy favored the other direction. Almost, "If no body, no KIA." And this, then, built up all these stories that people should have been listed—if not KIA, at least "MIA, presumed dead," to give you exactly what we think. That wasn't quite done that way, and that's why. It wasn't because somebody just mystically dreamed it up, or we were trying to be cruel, but you add up the pressures and put yourselves in our place up here, and I think you would have done the same thing. You would have taken a very harsh view of calling anybody KIA, because anytime you did, boy, you had better damn well be able to substantiate it with a lot of good stories and a lot of, at least, statements from people, or all hell breaks loose. As I say, you get enough of it over there. You don't like to come home and get some more of it.

The stories of guys being dead or alive, and the problems we had—and to show you just how confused we were—another very real story. A buddy of mine that I lived with, was shot down after five other people were shot down. The four that survived took a while to get up to Hanoi—they had taken off from Danang and Chu Lai—three out of four planes were shot down and five people were lost—one was killed. Later this guy shows up and we start talking about this particular case, and he happened to be on duty at one of the bases. He says, "Yes, those guys are dead." Why? Nobody necessarily saw anything, but if you went down in Package I, which was at the very southern end of the North Vietnamese panhandle, if you went down near the DMZ in Package I, they killed you; that's all there was to it. That was the report; that was the works: "If you go down there, you're dead."

Most of the time it was true. They just didn't take any prisoners. So the guy is up there in Chu Lai, in Danang, drinking beer that night, toasting his five buddies who have "bought the farm," and have given the ultimate sacrifice, and all of a sudden I say, "I was just talking to one of them a couple of months ago," and the guy damn near flipped. "Are you kidding me?"

Not only was he alive, but four out of five made it all the way from the DMZ. Six weeks later they ended up in Hanoi.

I think you can see that we had as many problems over there as you did here. I think the final source of the problem was not what we did, but the way the North Vietnamese handled things. In a normal, semi-civilized situation if a guy is taken prisoner, his status will usually come out within a short period of time. As a result, you should have in your minds an attitude of three separate categories.

People are killed in war, and they are called "KIA."

People end up missing in war, and they are called "MIAs."

Some people end up as "POWs."

None of these people have anything in common, except that they did not come back like the normal soldier who goes all around and when his tour is up he comes back. Only in that respect do they have something in common.

What do these three categories have in common? Absolutely nothing.

What came home were the POW's. Whether or not there are a few left here or there, that can be argued. The POW group is not a part of this huge group of what you think of as MIA. Most of the MIA's were dead the second that they were called MIA. From the stories I have already given you, you can see more

than likely—and as Dr. Shields pointed out earlier today—most of them were killed outright, right then, for a whole wide variety of means and methods; but they're carried as MIA. They are KIA, even though in our minds we get them confused. There is no way these people are going to appear—there's no way that they can come home as a POW because they're dead. The reason I came out is because I was alive.

If the North Vietnamese had been halfway decent, this would not have been a confusing fact in your minds. There's no way to correct that now; it's nobody's fault, in this country, anyway; but it is something now you have to go back and try to reestablish in your own mind: that these three categories are not one and the same category.

Now, who belongs to what section is a valid question, and we've got to resolve it. They're not the same thing, and you have to view it in that way.

Okay, I'm shot down now, I'm coming down in a parachute. We've just got past a whole bunch of bum reports—the possibility of bum reports from all kinds of points of view. You're facing that, but now I'm facing the physical problem of staying alive. What are my chances?

From all reports I received, if you had a good chute you obviously are going to be a POW. I think I can substantiate—and I'll try to do it right now—that if you are coming down in a parachute, just shot down, and you just got out of your aircraft—you do have a parachute—you're not dead in the parachute yet, anyway—your chances of making it to Hanoi are 50-50. That's going to be very difficult for you to accept, and I'll try to show you why I think that way, but I will stand on that percentage.

To begin with, I mentioned before they are blazing away like all get out at you, usually with 37's—37's are like a huge machine gun bullet that has a tracer on it. You are just hanging there, limp in the chute, and there is nothing I can do, this junk is coming up all around me, it's just a matter of one of them finding the same spot in the sky that I'm occupying at that time. If it happens, I'm dead; and if it doesn't, I'm alive. There's nothing I can do about that. I can sit up there and kick my legs all I want to. Usually I'm so scared, and so much in shock, that I just don't budge. There is nothing that we can control about that. To put a percentage on that, I could just try to grab something out of the air and say maybe 5 percent of the guys could be lost that way. It's very real because, as I said, we have seen people shot dead in the chute beyond any shadow of a doubt to the ability to report it. How many more were we close to, and we know that they were being shot at—and POW's can tell you time and again, like several hundred examples, where they were conscious of that junk coming up around them. How many other people who never came home whom we have never heard of that were shot dead in their chutes? Perfectly healthy, 100 percent strong individual in a good chute, talking on his radio, or trying to anyway, coming down, no reason not to be a POW, and does not even reach the ground alive. There's your first cut.

How many guys, again, died that way? This is immediately upon landing. I would venture to say this is where we lost most of the guys that should be POW's; strong, healthy guys in a parachute who could, we claimed, reach the ground alive, but are killed within five minutes because of the fear, and the way the North Vietnamese hunt you down. A big section are lost immediately.

Another one that leads into a lot of erroneous reports and a lot of false hopes that I would share with you if I had not been there and seen the way the North Vietnamese operate:

A guy gets down and is not immediately captured, or is not immediately surrounded. He has an opportunity to evade. This was not my personal opportunity. They were waiting for me with open arms—but a lot of guys did evade. The guys that evaded and ended up being captured have very hairy stories; and the reason is, the North Vietnamese again, they're petrified of you.

Let's say there's a small hill—this happened to Jack because he did come down on a little hill—and there was just a little tiny hole, a dugout, so to speak, and he was just sitting in there. He couldn't go anywhere because there were bullets going all over the place. The North Vietnamese come up the hill, all of them had guns, and they are just mowing the place down. If they think you are in the bush, they'll shoot all through it, and then they'll go and look. That's not necessarily because they are vicious—not that I like the people or want to justify them, but they are simply petrified. They shoot first and ask questions later. That was the experience up there, to a man.

Jack was only grazed on the hand. He was down low, the bullets were going all around him, finally, when they saw him, the soldier realized that he had Jack, but if being afraid, he could have blown Jack's brains out. So I say, a lot depends on the cover. If you are in a very hard place to get to that has a hard access, the odds are actually that you'll be killed, because there's no way, as there was with Jack, they finally come up on you and there you are, you know, completely in the clear, hands up, no weapons, so that they'll stop. If they have to peek around the corner, I can guarantee you it's going to be first with a few bullets, and then they'll peek around the corner.

Again that's really somewhat justified. There are a few cases where the Yank has had the opportunity to fight back, and they'll be lucky not to have their brains blown out because we will do it every chance we get. So it's not completely unfounded.

The thing is, we lose a lot of guys right there—yet the report will come back, especially if he was on the radio on the ground, you know, "Well, gee, he's resisting, he's out," you know, "he's evading. He's got to be a POW then."

I would have agreed with you in 1966. Today I have to totally disagree with you. Because our experience will indicate that if you are resisting, the odds now are not that you will be a POW; the odds are that you are going to be killed.

A lot of guys did evade. A lot of guys did resist and they were picked up; whereas, if they had surrendered, they wouldn't have been picked up, quite obviously. We probably lost a lot of guys because of that, who were killed right there by the North Vietnamese. That's very unfortunate, but that's war; it's not nice. We cannot afford the philosophy of surrender. We must resist as long as we have the means to, and I'll back that philosophy to the end. However, it cost some guys their lives.

So, there, in your boots, and mine a few years ago, a story that would indicate to you the guy should be alive, he should be a POW, today to me means he is probably dead, simply because he was, in fact, alive on the ground; because he was, in fact, on the radio; because he was in contact with us; because that meant he was resisting and the North Vietnamese had to track him down. Now the way I view it, his odds of being alive are very slim. He will not become a POW. I have a lot of stories to back that up of guys who have escaped and the way they were captured. Of course, all these cases, often they were found in some fairly open areas. The big thing was that there were no erratic moves, but they could sense—and some guys actually were shot—alive, but were shot because they made just that, an erratic move, a sudden move, a guy came up from behind, so the guy is still holding his gun, and they shoot first and ask questions later.

Now, you get on the ground and we get into a very unpleasant topic, and that's when they are downright hostile to you after they have, in fact, captured you. Five, 10, 15 minutes have gone by, you are now a bonafide POW in the hands of the North Vietnamese, somewhere in North Vietnam, but not Hanoi. They are not particularly friendly.

Normally, if you were shot down in the panhandle down there, around the southern part of North Vietnam, the militia and the people were ready to tear you apart; and, again, probably for some pretty damn good reasons. Usually the military almost saved you. Well, in my case, it was the opposite; considering the situation, I thought they treated me halfway decent. I said that's "considering the situation." They are my enemy, they are very hostile, but, you know, they weren't downright animals to me immediately. When the military got hold of me they really put me through the program—so that was kind of opposite.

You've heard of the "Hanoi Parade?" That was one example of how the people could be psyched up there, even in Hanoi. Well, you were paraded individually down in the panhandle. I had, not a parade, but a little "showing." They dragged me out into kind of a crowd, and that night it was like sitting in a pack of wolves, and they were closing down ready to, literally, tear me apart by hand. The guy was using me as a scapegoat, psyching the people up, and when they were literally ready to pounce like wolves, he yanked me out, calmed them down, started psyching them up again, and dragged me back out in the center of them. I went through that little experience three times, and every one of those three times I did not think I was going to come out of that circle alive.

That's a common story—that's as common as paper is in the United States. Nothing exceptional about that; and some a lot worse. Guys were forced to run a gauntlet "Indian style" with a hundred armed Vietnamese on the sides. Then they proceeded to beat the hell out of him as he passed. These are little games they can play with you.

I survived because that boss-man had final control, but it was close. What happens when he loses that control at the last second? What happens when that Yank doesn't make it down to the end? There are some really vicious guys at his sides who downright club him with a rifle butt and give him a fracture. He falls to the ground and they still manage to take a few more cracks at him before they can pull him out of there.

Again, I am forced to believe that for every guy that survived that, there are guys that died from it; probably on a one-to-one ratio. This bit about being put in front of a group, run a gauntlet, being paraded—out of 350 POW's that I am personally close to, I would venture to say I could give you 200 real good stories of exactly that type of situation.

So, again, the odds of staying alive, from the healthy chute, down to the ground, are being taken away very rapidly.

If you can survive all that, the odds are you'll make it to Hanoi. You've pretty well survived. You've been shot at in the chute, you've not been shot immediately on the ground, not shot if you're evading or resisting, and not perished if put before the people in some kind of parade performance, then you've got the other 50 percent that makes it.

Once you get to Hanoi, you're going to have about a 95 percent chance of making it. But it's 50-50 from the healthy chute to Hanoi.

Or maybe I should clarify that. In one respect, when I say 50-50, that's from a chute, period; not a healthy chute. Because part of that 50-percent fatality will have to go to injuries. I am figuring loosely—and I hope you have the idea: don't quote statistics all the time—if you're injured, you are really hurting, and hurting bad. Not because they would not necessarily give you medical attention—although that was certainly a fantastic problem—not because the wound itself was that bad—although a lot of times that was a problem. The big killer was infection. They couldn't stop it amongst themselves when they had, by their standards, very good medical attention.

It was so bad that guys would have real serious problems after the North Vietnamese tried to operate on them a few times; after that they would say, "No, thanks," because the infection got them. They might fix a bone, they might fix an arm, they might do all sorts of things, but then they end up wiping you out because your body is riddled with infection. That was a killer over there. It's a hot climate, along with zero hygiene, and it tore people up. The least little scratch could lead to death over there, and that is not an exaggeration.

You get a little scratch there on your fingertip and very likely it would become infected—this happened up there to our own people—and that finger winds up blown up to the size of a baseball—not just a baseball, a softball—and wind up, in one case, completely draining every bit of tissue from about here down on a hand [indicating] before finally they gave him enough medical attention to overcome the infection. That finger wasn't chopped off, it wasn't shot at, it had nothing to do with being a POW, except that he was denied medical treatment, it was infection. This is going to explain one thing right off the bat: Why are there no amputees? There's no way in hell an amputee could live. No way. To do it would take an absolute miracle. Not because of loss of blood; not because they didn't get medical attention; they could do everything in the world for him, and nearly everything else in the world being equal, he would live, but infection is going to kill him. I would not even look for an amputee.

It's almost fantastic—some of the problems which many of us had with infection. If you are injured, you're in trouble.

To give you a very real example of this, is my own case. My leg was injured. It became infected. If I had been 1 week later getting to Hanoi, I don't think I would have lived. When they finally got me there, I had to go to the hospital for an operation—this was 3 weeks later. When they took me in there I thought they were going to cut my leg off. But they cut it all open and drained all the junk out, and they gave me enough medication that I overcame it. And I consider myself one of the luckiest medical cases up there. It was a very small injury, really superficial, nothing major—but it became infected. One more week and I would have been dead.

I might point out something that might hit some of you real close. A picture was taken of me in the initial interrogation about three days after I was shot down. They put me in pajamas and stood me up, and I appeared to be a 100 percent healthy person. The bandage around my arm, and a larger bandage around my knee, would not show in any way if I was standing among a bunch of POW guards.

I could have walked. If they had had movies, I would have been limping. As a matter of fact, if there were movies, most of the time I had a stick or cane or something like that. It would have been very easy, if they did take a picture of me—they could have very easily gotten a picture of me standing up, perhaps in a motion of walking, but if it was a still picture, I could have been limping and you never would have seen that. I would have appeared to be a perfectly healthy POW. And that would have been a 100 percent proven case where good old Georgie was a POW.

A lot of guys, if they were shot down in the panhandle, or in any remote area—and this is where Laos will come in, particularly—they might not—well, not only might not, they definitely could not make it to Hanoi that quick. At Hanoi was the first time that you had any opportunity to get halfway decent medical attention—if they wanted to give it to you—and they didn't always want to do that. A lot of guys spent 6 weeks getting up to the main POW system in Hanoi. If they were injured, they're not going to make it. If it's a bad injury, it becomes infected. That's why there are a lot of bone injuries. Quite a lot of the bone injuries were internal. All right, they might not heal them, particularly, or set them, but guys—you can't see it in their clothes—but guys have all kinds of crazy bone injuries that they could survive because most of the time it didn't get infected. Open cuts, you know, lacerations, there's not too much chance, and there are not too many of them.

Examples we have, ungodly, unbelievable stories—

Once you make it to Hanoi, your chances are pretty good—95 percent. Again, that's close. It may be 90, it may be 97, but it's pretty high.

Where did we lose the few that we did lose? Well, part of it is that guys get there that were too sick to recover. Another perfect example of this: a guy up there, due to maltreatment—it started off as minor injuries—but it was absolute maltreatment, lack of care, by the time he got up there his body was total infection and he had pneumonia and he died within about a week or 10 days. They could have tried, if they really wanted to, I think one doctor did, to the best of our knowledge—but I mean there just wasn't anything left to work with.

In a few cases, guys were in such bad medical shape they could not be saved, although they got to Hanoi still alive.

In another case, one of the more sadder ones, and one that would really upset you, are the guys that they killed, at least indirectly. As far as I am concerned, they did it directly. Not through execution but through the mind.

A lot of guys were driven insane. And there's reason to be driven insane. It was a helluva battle for all of us not to go insane. Some guys did not quite make it—they're not totally insane in the sense of a straitjacket, although we had at least two cases of that—but they are so bad that the mind started doing funny things. They may kill themselves. They may stop eating. They just might go off in some oblivious world and just not care about anything. Not take care of their hygiene. Then if the guy loses a lot of weight and gets sick and dies, then you can say he died from natural causes. Well, if that's your opinion, you go ahead and have it. As far as I am concerned, the North Vietnamese killed him because of what they did to his mind. They put him in that position. Well, we lost a few guys—this is a handful—5, 10—I'm not being real specific, but it's a small number. There's only going to be maybe 3, 4, 5 percent that died this way all told, so we lost a few there.

Usually, if you get to Hanoi, I say you have a pretty good chance medically; but if it's expedient, it doesn't happen that way.

I might mention that I think these people can be accounted for or should be able to be accounted for, John might be the exception. Obviously, if they felt that hostile toward him, he could have been like the guy thrown out of the truck, they would just take him and dispose of him somewhere. Maybe they did dig a grave, but nobody's going to care where, they're not going to care who he is, and they're not going to care to report it. I would say most of the people in this situation, of this 5 percent, who died in Hanoi, I think you should be able to account for 99 percent of them because they are there where North Vietnamese can report, take note of things, and know what's going on. In that case I would expect it—but I could be totally wrong about this.

I point out, too, that the next of kin have been notified by POW's. I've done that myself in about two or three cases, because part of my memory bank also was carrying what we called our "lost sheep": the guys who disappeared from our own midst. The ones that I was closest to were the people I notified personally. I would say almost in all of these cases, to the best of my knowledge,

we could tell them exactly what happened—we have made a point of doing that. We have been going to the next of kin ourselves and telling them exactly what happened, because we were pretty close to these stories, if they got to Hanoi.

That will give you an idea, then, of the difficulty of arriving in Hanoi as a live POW. It's pretty slim. Once getting there, pretty good. Now I'll give you a general odds level that I came up with as I was sitting up there one day just thinking, "I wonder how many guys are going to be shot down," based on the airplanes, "and how many are going to be prisoners?"

I came up with a percentage, based somewhere on facts, but I can't go back and say it's because of this particular story. However, the theories on this particular concept came up being fairly valid. I said one third of the people that are shot down I think will be picked up and rescued. I think the next third are going to become POW's, and a third are going to be killed in the process, you know, fly into the ground and killed, etc. In any event, they are going to die, and right away; not 3 months later, but right away.

I started to watch what happened to try to figure out, was this working out? But this is based somewhat on the inputs that were coming in at that time. Well, it turns out those figures are pretty darn close.

In the early parts of the war, in 1965, the percentage of pickups to POW's was higher. Maybe 40 percent instead of 33 1/3 were being picked up; maybe 50 percent, because we were operating primarily down in the panhandle section of North Vietnam, or the remoter sections, and the opportunity of getting in with SAR was much better, plus the North Vietnamese air defense was not that well developed yet.

Now, as we start to shift in toward Hanoi, our pickup rate goes down, almost to zero in mid-late-1967 and early 1968, because now all the planes that are being shot down are primarily in that area. If they are shot down there the chance of a rescue is almost zero, there's just no way. You're captured, in fact, when you touch the ground.

So, now we have a lot more POW's, relatively speaking, and very few pickups. And all the time, all I can do is assume that one-third are being killed along the way.

Overall, when you balance it out, that came out to be a pretty close figure. That is not any kind of an official report, but it turned out to be fairly close: one-third, one-third, and one-third.

Let's take a look and see if that can apply to Laos when there are only, what, 6, 7, POW's, military type? How many missing? A fantastic number of missing.

If you look at it real close, I would say those figures are still good in Laos. The reason being that the one-third that should have been POW's ended up being rescued, because the rescue rate in Laos is 70 percent, and that is absolutely phenomenal. As a matter of fact, it's so phenomenal it's impossible, but that's what we have: 70 percent were rescued. How can that be?

It's pretty easy in Laos, and some of you have seen it for yourself now. It's so darn primitive, the ground is so jagged, rugged, people are isolated, that a guy can come down and will not be captured right away. If I come down on the delta I'm going to be captured right then. If I come down in the panhandle, the odds are about 75 percent I'm going to be captured immediately. To come down in Laos, I'd say the chances of being captured immediately are about 1 percent, which means if that guy is alive, he's going to be rescued, more than likely because he does have a radio, usually a wingman is with him, and if he goes down, we're going to be able to pick him up. We do not have to worry about the enemy immediately coming in there. We do not have to worry about villagers all over the place which would make it impossible for a SAR effort. More than likely he is in a remote area. The very fact that makes it difficult to find him today was his protection in those days, because that's the first place we tried to go: if you can't make it to the water, you headed for the mountains. That was our protection. Consequently, it is not so wild to me when I think, "Gee, where are the POW's?" The POW's were picked up within a few days of the time they were shot down, because the pickup rate in Laos was so phenomenal.

Well, you say, "Surely there's some POW's." Well, of course, I can say, "Right, there were 7 of them." That's not a very good answer, or at least it is not really meant in complete jest, but, okay, let's take that other third, "Couldn't there have been more POW's there?" And I say, "No. Look at that terrain, and look at the problems of being shot down."

You're going to say suddenly the likelihood of a POW in Laos is near zero.

You're coming down in the air—this doesn't apply 100 percent to all terrain in Laos, but it applies to a heck of a lot of it—the odds of you making it uninjured are really slim. Even if you are healthy in the chute, when you finally land you've got to penetrate those trees, to jungle, and then you've got to fight that karst, and it's all over the place. Believe me, when you are coming down in a parachute, and suddenly you bounce off that karst, you're lucky if you're going to be alive 2 seconds later.

That stuff is unbelievable—it's so sheer that even when you hit you can't stop. It's not like hitting flat rock, it's more like coming down a rough concrete slab. What a jolt! It's easy to break a leg. That stuff can be so sheer that you could come down and start sliding right down like that [indicating], and it will actually peel you like a grater. The chances when going down in Laos, I think, are pretty slim of your not being injured, even if you are healthy in the chute. Then you've got the problem of the airplane blowing up from the thing that shot you down—well, it's almost impossible to get out of there uninjured.

Now, where are you? The thing that gave you protection from the enemy is now the enemy itself, because now if we can't rescue you immediately, if we can't find you and get you out of there, you are stranded, isolated in the boondocks, injured. Infection applies here just like it did before—but now you're not even captured—you're just sitting there wounded. You might not even be able to move. If you can—talk to the people that operated down on the ground—you can't move that fast even if you are healthy, even if you do have guns, machetes, medical implements, or medicines, as well as food. It's still hard to move.

The very place, or the reason that gives you protection also makes it the hardest place to travel in. The protection from the enemy, from the North Vietnamese catching you, makes it the hardest to travel in.

If you're injured, you're really in trouble. There is no way to do anything about it, so guys that do come down and make it to the ground alive in Laos, again, you say are POWs. After being there and seeing the people that come out, the situation they lived under, the remoteness of their situation, I now think they are going to be dead within, say, 1 week to 2 weeks. Infection is going to wipe them out. Infections, hunger, and thirst. You don't die of hunger in 2 weeks' time; it takes 30 days.

The guys that have talked that survived there said that the big trouble was lack of water. Laos is dry, especially if you are up in the high ground. Absolutely dry. If they've gone through this training school, the survivor school, and they have found the right spot and were alert to it, you can find water up there to stay alive; but that's something a lot of guys didn't pay too much attention to. They've been to one survival school—I'm a good example—I'll be damned if they're going to send me to another one in the Philippines. I would not have known how to get water in the jungle until a guy whom I ended up with in the POW camp had been there, and started telling me how you get water in a dry jungle.

Now, I would say that would be the case with about 75 percent of the aviators: they would not have known how to find water. Without water, you're going to be dead in 7 days, and that's under normal conditions. He's wounded perhaps, and dehydrating, it could be accelerated down to where he'll be dead in 4 to 5 days. He's fighting infection. You add it up, and he's not going to be a POW—not because a North Vietnamese killed him; Laos killed him; it just gobbled him up.

Now, let's say he is captured. He has got the same problem that I and a lot of other guys faced if you were shot down in the panhandle: you're remote. If you're injured, you're probably not going to get medical treatment in time and you're going to be fighting infection. They can still kill you right on the spot, too. This tended to happen in Laos, I think, a great deal more.

Now, we just don't have enough people to say this is the way it appeared to happen, you know, right across the board. Too many stories come out of there that make me think—and that's why I am doing this—to make me think, if I'm going to take an opinion—that guys were executed rather handily in Laos, at least compared to North Vietnam. Enough guys were killed in North Vietnam that way.

This isn't an execution where they stand you up—it's just like I described before: they just run up as you're coming down, and shoot you; and like a typical one that we have seen—and also another one where a guy survived—he came down, again, through all those trees, and you're hung up in your parachute, 50 feet above the ground just hanging there, and there's no way to get out of it. They see you right away, and you've got about five bullets in you immediately.

This idea of being shot upon capture in Laos seemed to be more prevalent than it was in North Vietnam.

You add that up for Laos, and my conclusion is as I view all the situations and all the data that I have been able to pick out is that this Laos figure that I came up with of one-third, one-third, one-third, holds up. Except in Laos, the one-third that should have been POWs were rescued and brought home, 70 percent were, in fact, rescued. So, consequently, there are no POWs. The guys, if they made it to the ground alive or not, probably died there in that area, if not immediately, within a couple of days to 1 or 2 weeks. I would venture to say that very few were captured, simply because there was nobody there to capture them, and if they were, they were going to be treated extremely hostile and probably killed within a couple of weeks.

The one area that I'm not super-keen on—I know about it and I've heard a lot of stories, and I may be better informed than you in some respects—is the group that came up from South Vietnam. Obviously, I wasn't there, but I do know what the terrain is like and I have a pretty good idea of what they went through.

There the physical environment, even after being captured, was a lot worse than it was in Hanoi. The fact that he became a POW in a controlled environment was not nearly as much an assurance of being alive as it was in Hanoi. As a matter of fact, it's two totally different stories. Depending upon the particular group you were with and the report that they give out, you might come up almost with a 60 or 70 percent casualty rate. Many guys died en route trying to go up to North Vietnam.

Was there any common factor to determine who made it out alive and who didn't?

I don't think so. If you're hanging in a parachute and they are shooting bullets at you, you may be Catholic, you may be Jewish, you may be a ring-knocker from the Academy, or you may be some stupid cadet, you may be an EM or you may be a pilot, but if that bullet decides to show up in the same spot, you're dead. If you want to be philosophical about it—apparently God decided to take some to him, and He decided to let some other guys fool around on this earth for a while. When you look at it in that one area, particularly, how can you say it's because of what the guy was like, his personality, or anything else?

I think that applies to all the problems that I've been presenting to you. There's a man on the ground and a guy comes up and starts rattling bullets off at you. It's not a fact of who you are; it's whether or not he's going to hit you. Whether or not you survive a gauntlet, the closest you could come to coming up with a factor would be your general basic health. That's not necessarily based on age—and it's not based on being in shape, being able to do push-ups, or lift barbells—but if you have an inherent good metabolic health, or whatever you want to call it, then if you were faced with running a gauntlet and getting beat up, if you're faced with an injury and you're trying to fight infection, I suppose then your odds are going to be better.

Now the big problem is to try and account for these people; where they are, and what happened to them.

First, you ought to consider North Vietnamese philosophy and attitude. In other words, how do they take care of their own? Well, I would say that maybe they do it fairly well if they have the opportunity; but in wartime, you do an awful lot of things for expedient reasons, a lot of things you're not particularly proud of later, but at the time, you felt you had to do them.

The same certainly applies to them, and in this area, it will apply even more so. At Khe San, one of the best examples was an open grave with 1,500 bodies—maybe they accounted for those 1,500 bodies to their people in North Vietnam.

I am not so sure that they did, in my own mind. I can't say they didn't. Just the fact that they handled them that way, and it was one that was done hastily, the bodies just thrown in there, I'm inclined to think that they probably did not account for them that well—maybe they did.

The big thing to keep in mind is that communism does not have any concept of the individual human dignity. That's the whole difference between us and them. That's the reason we fight them. Not because of socialism, that's economics. The reason we do it is because of a very basic difference in our philosophy, and that's what so many people lose sight of, and they get bogged down in these side issues.

As a result if they can account for people easily, they probably would. If it becomes expedient not to, they are not going to feel bad about it. They have no

such thing as principle. The only principle they have is, what is good today is, is truth.

This you can get from them; you don't have to believe me. Listen to them, and you're going to find out that their whole philosophy of life is totally different. Truth is relative; it's what it is today; what is helpful and beneficial, and this is going to apply to trying to count the bodies—not only for our people, but for theirs.

They can't account for their own, and they're not going to be able to account for all of ours. It's because of this concept that they begin with: There is no such thing as human dignity.

How could you get accounting then? Well, a lot of times with the communists—the only thing you can do is hope that an individual remembers. You're walking along asking questions and this has happened over there already: "Yes, I remember. He died over there; we dug a hole and buried him; he's over there somewhere." He might be able to take you to the exact spot.

Your'e asking a guy to remember, though, some times 7 years later, and you've got to find the guy to begin with. That means a personal interrogation of everybody in North Vietnam and Laos. Which, I think you'd have to agree, is obviously impossible.

You cannot say, absolutely for sure, that you can't find out until you've interrogated everyone. So if you want to know, 100 percent, you have to, in fact, interrogate every single person.

The guy that buried him may very likely be dead. As a matter of fact, the odds are that he is, because we wiped out an entire generation of manpower there. We lost a few, but I think they lost a million. That's some of the numbers they're even starting to admit.

They paid a price to try to make this war continue. That's what they were willing to take, hoping that we would give up. But in the process, a lot of ability to account and gain information is gone. It died with the people that had it.

I would venture to say, and this just a wild guess, but I don't think it's really that far off. I would say there's a good chance that 50 percent of Laos has never had a human being in it. Some of that forest ridge, is just this great, big, solid hunk of rock, sheer on all sides, and you've got a hill up on top of it, and the only way some of its being inhabited today is because of the U.S. influence there, because a helicopter can go up there and land. That's where they put a lot of camps, because nobody can touch them. We have camps right in the middle of the enemy, and he knows they're there, and helicopters come in there and work SAR efforts out of there, and the commies can't do anything about it, because there's no way to get up there, except by helicopter.

If a guy lands in a place like that, which does not happen to be one of our forward bases, or rescue bases, you're not going to find it. To try and search Laos, to go over it, every inch of it with a fine tooth comb would be an impossible effort if you had everybody working for you.

If he did eject there is even less chance of finding anything. The body's decayed by that time; you might find bones, but it's probably been carried off by animals.

That's not a very nice way to look at it, but unfortunately, that's reality. If you expect that guy to come back alive, you're crazy.

This comes back to a statement—I'm sure many of you are familiar with it; I've heard it enough, lately, anyway: When a woman, mother, wife, whatever, says, "I will believe when they bring his bones home. No bones, no belief." Well, I just can't be sympathetic to that. No way. Absolutely no way. Because we cannot get 100 percent of the bones back.

As a matter of fact, if that's the type of evidence, I mean, if you want to stick to it—that's the words they're stressing—if you want actual, physical bones, then I would say you would be lucky if you can get hardly any. You may get a couple of bones, you may get a set of dog tags that survived, or you may get the indication of the crash site, and there's no way he got out, nobody recovered him. If you really want the bones, you're really barking up an impossible tree to climb. I can't support that attitude, quite obviously, from all that I've been saying today.

I think the final area, now, in trying to account for POWs is just the philosophical one, and I think it's an important one. It may be one of the hardest for you to accept and live with—and that is, why were we prisoners, or why were we treated the way we were?

All you can go on is my attitude; however, a lot of people share this attitude. I think I can substantiate it, if you had the time. It took me 7 years to learn it, I think you could learn it a little bit faster, by reading, but it would take a lot of time: Trying to understand how North Vietnamese think, and why they act the way they do.

They are not human beings over there, they are not civilized, and all we were, were political hostages. We were worth our weight in gold; probably ten times over. That's the only reason we were alive.

In the initial days—you've heard some of the stories that came out of the way we were treated, all they wanted was a warm body. We did not even have to be human beings. All they needed was a warm body that was alive.

Later, because of the political pressures and propaganda influence that it started to carry, they decided that we needed to be more than a warm body. We had to appear to be human. Consequently, our treatment changed drastically. We were closer to being treated like humans, though a long way from it.

That was not because of any humanitarian concept that they had—absolutely zero. They're absolute barbaric savages. With absolutely no concept of human dignity. The only reason they keep you is because you are worth something to them. That's the only reason they do anything—what do I get out of it? They don't do anybody a favor, they don't do anybody a nice turn.

If you cease to be good to them as a political hostage, they're going to get rid of you, because they're not going to spend money to feed you, to clothe you, to shelter you, and to guard you. If you're not good for something to them, they're going to get rid of you.

So, for this reason, regardless of the physical data you have, I've come to the conclusion that I don't think there are going to be more people over there alive. There's no reason for them to be alive. You're no good if you're hidden out in some remote village. All that means is it costs them time, energy, and money, to keep you alive, and they don't have any to spare.

With that, I guess I can start drawing some conclusions. I think, though I haven't stated it, particularly till now, it becomes pretty obvious how I feel, and before stating it, I want you to understand why I feel that way. I've been going on now, for over two hours, trying to explain why.

It's not just a sudden thought, but having seen all that happened, I in my mind do not see this block of MIA's. I see KIA, MIA, and POW's. The best that I can determine, and I know the vast, huge majority of POW's support me in this attitude, all live POW's came home.

I mean there are no live Americans that we know of. All of them came out. There is going to be a very difficult time accounting for them. This is one time I'm going to pull a figure out of the air—but I personally believe it; I cannot substantiate it per se, and you're not going to like it—but I really don't think you have much chance of accounting for more than 20, maybe 30 percent. Actually, I think you're going to be lucky to account for more than 10 percent.

You should be able to account for those people that died in Hanoi, that reached Hanoi. At least, a high percentage of them. I mentioned 99 percent—up in that area; 90 percent at least. Out of 50 guys, you should be able to account for 48 or 49. If they get out of that area, you're fighting the odds tremendously.

I say you're fighting it even when you've got the whole world working for you, and now you've got to fight North Vietnam. Right now, you have zero chance, because as long as they won't cooperate with you, you can't go in there, you're not going to get anything done.

That has nothing to do, again, with us, but if we can't go in there, you're wiped out. If we do go in there, that's when maybe you can get 20 to 30 percent accountability.

If there is any problem, I just hope you keep one thing in mind, that the enemy is not inside the United States. Just remember who the enemy was and is. No matter what your political views are, or how much you may or may not like the military or DOD, we are on the same side. Your enemy is in North Vietnam, it's called communism. They're the ones who killed your sons or husbands; they're the ones who tortured them; they're the ones that hang onto POW's beyond any logical reason to keep them; they're the ones willing to lose 1 million of their men in the hope that we would give up our determination to defend another part of that country.

They are your enemy, and they're the people you want to fight. If you ever lose sight of that, number one, you're not going to get my support; you're not

going to get the support of any POW; you're not going to get the support of anybody in the government; and I doubt if you're going to get the support of very many Americans. We here are on the same team, and the enemy is over there. If you want to fight them, I'm on your side.

I think that fairly well wraps up my attitude, and I hope I've fairly well substantiated it.

Mrs. POWERS. Will you take questions now?

LCDR COKER. I'm ready now to take questions, as long as you want to ask them. Incidentally, some of the ones you asked this morning, I'll entertain them now.

Mrs. POWERS. George Creed?

Mr. CREED. One comment that I'd like to make, on the guys that did get out of the aircraft, and what have you, and possibly even in another situation—did they take I.D. cards, the Geneva Convention cards, the dog tags? Is there any way that they would have kept a record of this? The man may not have made it up there; he may have been dumped on the side of the road, but is there any central agency, or any central place that these documents could have gotten to?

LCDR COKER. They could have, yes, and sometimes, they did. I could give you specific examples of almost all the things you said. As soon as they catch you, they strip you of everything you have. They had a little packet of mine because I saw it on a couple of occasions. It had my blood chit, which is that little piece of cloth with the American flag and that stuff on it, my I.D. card, my Geneva Convention card.

Even if he came down as a body; dead in the chute or dead in an ejection seat at a crash site, they often did pull this stuff out. There's a good chance that it's recorded, somewhere.

Some of these things actually appeared later and were given to POW's, just before we were released. There is some accounting; this is not a matter that they don't do anything. They had their bureaucracy, and it does work somewhat. There are records, and a lot of that stuff did get up there, and there's a damn good chance—well, I won't say that there's a good chance; there's a chance—how good, I don't know, that there are records of guys that died up there.

The big thing is, if they have it, and they say, here's an I.D. card, the guy died, then the next question is—give us all the circumstances. Then I say you have very little chance of getting this information.

Somebody sends identification up, the report comes in, such and such plane crashed, we get the card. That will probably be all the story they have there, though they may have the whole report.

Mr. CREED. Should we be able to account for everything in these cases, or can they do this? How would you estimate that?

LCDR COKER. Okay, missing right now—and these figures aren't exact—515 in North Vietnam. I say you've got a fair chance there, because their planes are coming down in an area where there are people. In other words, the site should have been found by now. There's a good chance that stuff was picked up, if the plane didn't totally burn.

Yes, I think—there's a chance, you should get some account. It's hard to say how much, but I'd say there's a reasonable opportunity to say, "Give us those, because you should have them." They may not have them all but they should have some.

South Vietnam, 505—I'm not so sure that you'll get very much out of South Vietnam. Laos, 315, I'd say almost 0 out of Laos. But I don't think, personally, that a lot of those ever were captured. Now, you see that's my own personal attitude. I think they were killed (in Laos) by crashing, injury, and that type of thing, and not because they were captured and shot.

Mr. HOPPER. I have two questions. Do you have any suggestions as to how this MIA issue and accounting could be resolved?

LCDR COKER. Okay, you're going to get into politics. I'm not afraid of it, but just remember, now I'm speaking for myself.

They only understand one language, and that's force. You can't talk to them. It's pretty obvious—in other words, I can see why you people get frustrated because Dr. Shields gives you what seems like a runaround; but that's what they do. I've listened to it for 7 years. I listened to it, personally, directed at me, and all the propaganda they pump out. It's enough to make you sick.

That's the way they operate, and the only thing they understand is one thing, and that's power. If they are bargaining with you, it's because they think they can get something out of you.

There's nothing you can do now, immediately, because the President has lost all his power to do anything over there. You called—and I say you; the American people—through their representatives have called back all these powers; we had a withdrawal; we can't even bomb over there.

Earlier someone asked a specific question: Why is it that they suddenly dropped the curtain, or closed the door to negotiations? Well, you go back and look at the date, and I'll tell you when they did it.

What was the date that we couldn't bomb in Cambodia any more?

VOICES. August 15.

LCDR COKER. That's when the door closed. Because up until that time, they kind of played games. Why did they respond so immediately in early 1973? Well, I'll tell you why. Those people were terrified. The first time the war came to Hanoi, really, to the people of North Vietnam, was Christmas, when those B-52's showed up.

I can tell you some pretty wild stories. They were terrified, and they were rattled, and they gave up. Maybe you don't know that yet, but I know it, from my point of view. I listened to their junk for so many years, and then they changed their attitude; they were surrendering, they were giving up, and they were beat. They had to play the game.

They were afraid of us, then. If they did not play the game right with us, they knew those B-52's were coming back, and let me tell you, they didn't want them back. They had had it. It was over.

Now the B-52's aren't there, the POW's are home, and they're pretty sure we won't send them back, and they've started playing games just a little bit. For a while, they kept going along, because: One, the hammer still might be there, but it was starting to disappear, and two, was the carrot of aid.

The American people were saying one thing that really upset me: "Thank God you're home, never, never, never will we go back to Vietnam. Never, never, never will we get into a situation like that again."

Who's listening to that? The North Vietnamese. That's just what they wanted, because that's what the war was about—political determination. Now they had become convinced that you would not back up an effort like that; they started playing the game more and more, and when Congress cut off the President in Cambodia, they closed the door.

You are not going to get anything out of North Vietnam because you think they're humanitarian, or because you think they're going to bargain with you. They're going to spit right in your eye.

The only reason they're going to tease you along is because they're trying to get something out of you. Whether they want you to stay involved, or don't want you to stay involved—you'll have to work on it awhile to figure out. They're only doing it for one reason: They want something, and that's the way they think they can get it.

VOICE. What is it they want?

VOICE. South Vietnam.

LCDR COKER. They want South Vietnam, they want all of Southeast Asia, and ultimately, they want the world—and they're going to fight for it.

Mrs. POWERS. Let's take the questions again. You said you had another question? You said you had two.

Mr. HOPPER. Yes. Do you feel, then, that it's to our benefit to keep the National League of Families going?

LCDR COKER. I'm not sure whether it is or not. I don't understand all that goes into it, but if you take some parameters—you have to make some assumptions—I feel you can answer that question.

Number one, are we going to go back in force with either major bombing efforts, or major ground forces into Southeast Asia?

As to bombing, I say 99 percent no—and that's because of the American people—not because of the military or the President. The public won't support it, especially right now. There might be a 1 percent chance—if there was an open, massive, public invasion, maybe then we could go back in there. The American people might buy it. Will we be able to send ground troops in there? 100 percent no.

Now we've got to start—this is going to be the basis of my decision—we've got to start knowing that no matter what is right, or what is wrong, no matter what is good or what is bad, we are *not* going to go in there with military force or personal intervention.

It's to the point right now that it's pretty difficult even to give them aid. Okay, with that in mind, what are your chances of accounting for them?

As it is right now, zero. We have finished up in South Vietnam, as Dr. Shields told you, which doesn't amount to much, because you look at the list, most of these people are in areas that are controlled by the North Vietnamese.

Your chances of accounting for them, and that is your primary objective, is almost zero right now.

Next, can we change that? Well, I just started off by saying, we will never go in there with people, and there's almost an impossible chance of going in there, even with air power, which to me means there's almost an impossible chance to get that accounting.

Capt. SMITH. The only thing that I would like to say is more or less along the same line that you (LCDR Coker) have said, except that what many people don't understand about the North Vietnamese, Vietcong, whatever you want to call them, is that they are administratively and tactically proficient in their units. They are many times better, administratively, than we are, because we have all the red tape, which they don't.

If a man in South Vietnam, Cambodia, or on some type of mission in Laos was knocked down in front of the infantry, or if a pilot's plane was shot down, there was no place in South Vietnam—and I'll say that categorically—no place in South Vietnam, that we couldn't go to where he was knocked down, and if we went there, and he wasn't there, then we were back to where you said that man had died and they threw him in a ditch, or whatever, and someone took him—these people do keep good records.

I'm not saying that any of the MIA's are alive, at all. I would not put it past those people to, you know, shoot everybody. I wouldn't put it past them to hold people back, but I wouldn't say that they kept them alive if they did hold them back.

They know what happened to a good percentage of these people. And I think that the majority of the families that I have talked to only want to know one way or the other.

VOICE. Right.

Capt. SMITH. Women are growing old, waiting for men, who there's almost no chance at all that they'll come back. There is a good possibility that the communists can say if they died in captivity or even if they died on the battlefield; because, 80-pound Vietnamese don't carry around dead 200-pound Americans, just for the sake of carrying them around.

If we went out there and the guy was gone, they took him. If we went out there, and we found his body, invariably his name tag would be gone, his unit patches would be gone, all this is reported, or recorded, and sent almost immediately, via radio, to Hanoi; Hanoi through COSVN in South Vietnam.

I think it all boils down to a question of not—I have no sympathy for someone who sits and throws their hands in the air and says, "I know he's alive." No one can say that, I don't care if they have pictures, or whatever.

The only thing that I say is that the communists can account for these people in a large number of cases, because all of this goes in the intelligence system; having nothing to do with their being humane, because they're just not.

They do have the information on these people, and it boils down to one thing: Are we, as the strongest country in the world, going to allow a small, utterly worthless group of people, to shoot our men on the battlefield, capture our people on the battlefield, and then just walk away and say, take their word for the fact that they can't account for them when those of us who have worked in the military, in intelligence, or just in the regular infantry and ground forces, we know that they can.

LCDR COKER. I have to disagree with you there. I'm sorry.

Capt. SMITH. Just wait one minute—now, the thing is, it has a very far reaching effect. Not just on you people here, but already, the guns are starting to shoot over in Israel. I'm sorry, I'll go anywhere that this government sends me to go, but starting with Korea and now in this war, if we are not going to, to the fullest possible, to our utmost ability, demand an accounting of the people who are missing in action, it's going to be very hard for me to ask 18-year old privates to follow me, anywhere. I'm responsible not just for one guy or two guys, but for 180 men, and they know that if they die, they'll be brought back and given an honorable burial, they know if they're wounded, they'll be sent to the hospital, and if they're captured and acknowledged by the communists by some quirk of fate as a prisoner of war, that possibly they'll be released, if they don't die of bad treatment.

They also know that they can end up in that limbo world of "missing in action." Their family will never know what happened, and they'll know that their country will not stand up and say look—as you said, the only thing they

understand is the finger right in the chest—Vietcong—be it good, be it whatever it is, or just a flat out demand, that we want the information that they have.

I'm sorry, but I worked in Southeast Asia for every one of the last 9 years, and the enemy over there is not stupid, his combat soldiers are good soldiers. It's his political people that are screwed up, because they have them on an equal basis with the commanders, right down to the battalion level.

The majority of the people that are missing on the ground, I can really agree with you about just coming down in a group of people that have been hit with the propaganda, day in and day out, like in North Vietnam. I think Cambodia, and South Vietnam, and in the border areas of Laos, believe it or not, you will find a debt of mutual respect, once the shooting's over, between one ground soldier and another.

Everything is recorded; they have major headquarters with typewriters and high-frequency radios, and the whole 9 years; they've got a lot more than we ever suspect; and for intelligence, they record everything.

An accounting can be made for a large percentage of the people who we didn't find, and aircraft which we didn't find—when we go into Laos, or Cambodia, or South Vietnam, or ground troops who disappeared, were brought out in front of us, and they were gone, because they didn't just shoot people and then carry them through the jungle, just for the effect on the morale of the American people; not in any way, shape, or form.

It all boils down, I think, to public opinion directed, not as much toward Hanoi, but toward our own leaders, that we do want these people accounted for.

LCDR COKER. Well, what you say happened in South Vietnam, I can't argue with you, because you were there.

Capt. SMITH. I've worked in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

LCDR COKER. What I'm saying is—right here, you can look at the numbers yourself of the people who are missing, aviation-type particularly, comes to a total of about 860—these are rough figures; they're not all up-to-date.

Those people are not people who were down in South Vietnam on the ground and in Laos on the ground, these are people shot down. I'm sorry, I can get 500 people to substantiate this, based on six and a half years up there with those people, (1) they do have a huge bureaucracy, very much like ours; they have fantastic red tape, and they don't keep good records.

I'm saying you might be able to get 50 percent of their records if they will give them to you, if they can find them, because although they may exist, so much is lost in their bureaucracy, it's unreal. I think I can understand your attitude Mark, because I was held up, locally, on two occasions, at my first capture and my second, that tactically, they operate that way.

Capt. SMITH. What about people which they may not have wanted to let go.

LCDR COKER. I can name about 10 or 15 cases of that, personally, of guys I know very well. Now you're faced with another problem: They're not going to tell you they tortured somebody up there; they're not going to tell you they drove them insane. That would be political suicide—they're never going to do that.

Capt. SMITH. No—

LCDR COKER. And if the body is going to indicate that, they're not going to give it to you. You're right, I'm not going to argue with you about what we can do and what we should do. We could get it out, if that became our first objection, of a national policy. We could account for what's accountable. I say, that won't be 100 percent, I'm not sure it would be a large percent, but we could get whatever they have. I won't argue that.

Capt. SMITH. All right. That's one of the things—

LCDR COKER. In most of the cases we know about, the disappearance happened long before release and the situation got very bad. One case: I couldn't put this up in court; I'd be thrown out. But one guy, I will guarantee you, that within 3 months after I saw him last, he was dead. Absolutely, in my mind, beyond a shadow of a doubt. But that's not worth a shred of evidence in court. That was long before the release came, or long enough—let's say it was 3 years. If he survived those three years, they would kill him before they'd let him go home.

Capt. SMITH. That is what my opinion is. My opinion is just one of somebody who's spent every year of his adult life fighting those people over there. I've got no use for them, and it galls me to think that they can account for people, and that we are going to let them get away with not accounting for them.

LCDR COKER. Well, they won't do it, but I have no control of that personally—

Capt. SMITH. No, I know that, but—

LCDR COKER. One thing, I'm sorry, Mark, you're giving them one misconception that I have to oppose. You may know what you saw in South Vietnam, but

what we're talking about, mostly, was in North Vietnam. Not exclusively, but certainly a large number.

If you tell these people, or indicate that you can account for 100 percent of them, you're misleading them. I'm sorry, but you're misleading them.

Capt. SMITH. No, I'm not saying I can account for 100 percent of them in South Vietnam.

LODR COKER. I think there you have a better chance than you do in the north.

Capt. SMITH. Well, South Vietnam, Cambodia, and in the border areas of Laos—I can't speak for North Vietnam. I can't even say that I've been there. You know, these people, the concept was just given to us through the news media and everything, is that these people were a bunch of guerrillas down in South Vietnam, that they were organized, and everything was taken—it might just be in their intelligence mill—I don't know, but they do have information on many people—they have information on people who, we have the bodies—they're dead, and they were lost out there for a little while, but they got their names, things like this.

The whole thing that I say, right down the line, is that they can account, if there's some way that we can make them account.

LODR COKER. Certainly they can account for some; that's beyond any shadow of a doubt. I know damn well they can account for some, even if I'm talking about just one man. But when you get to where you're talking about a thousand, now it becomes a matter of: what are you going to do to make them account for them. I say that is something you can talk about if you wish. Make sure we understand numbers and odds, so we can set objectives as to what we're trying to accomplish.

Capt. SMITH. I'm not saying that we can account for all of them, and I can probably say more about South Vietnam. I have operated in Cambodia, Laos, Special Forces, and some of the things that we did in there were to get into an area where a sensitive piece of equipment might be lost, or something like that. If the guy wasn't in the airplane, he could have been killed in his chute, like you said, but there's just so much that people don't understand about that little soldier, because he looks stupid, for one thing. Their army is on the ground, administratively correct, and COSVN headquarters in South Vietnam, which many military people think is just a fictitious organization, but it does exist—also kept very good records.

Mr. BROOKS. This has certainly been a revelation here today, this information. One comment, as far as the discussion you're having right now, we have been assured by our government representatives time and time again, that the other side are meticulous recordkeepers, and we would get information on a very substantial number of these people.

A lot of errors in reporting were due to pressure from family members? I don't see that, and concurrently, fliers give false reports to be charitable. Was this the practice among Naval fliers in particular?

LODR COKER. No, it's not a practice. Especially when you go to the point of a guy that you know is dead and call him MIA. However, I'll say this: I've read enough cases that I would say the examples of a guy getting target fixation, vertigo, and flying into the ground could be substantial.

If you go back and look into the records, I doubt you'll find more than two or three reports that word it that way. You don't say that; it'll be mechanical failure, he was probably hit, anything—not because he had target fixation or because he had vertigo. Because that is a no-no.

That's not out and out lying; that's just an automatic reflex in a pilot's mind. You can't understand that? I did the best I can to explain it to you. You've got to be up there, you've got to go through the same type of training, you've got to be psyched the same way to appreciate it.

Mr. BROOKS. You mentioned before the way we are brainwashed in aviation. Can you expand on that?

LODR COKER. First of all, the term "brainwashed" is one that I'm using very loosely. I'm not trying to be specific.

However, you're being trained to do something that is very dangerous. There's something that requires your skills, sometimes, beyond normal operating limits. You are trained, by rote reflex, to do things that you would not normally do.

You were trained to avoid target fixation at all costs, because if you don't, you're going to kill yourself by just that—target fixation. That's what I called "brainwashing," and I use the term very loosely. You are trained, to a very high degree, to avoid a lot of our problem areas, and that's the only way we can fly

those damn things up in the air and stay alive, because it is a dangerous business with an awful lot of problems.

The way we were flying over there, you would not be allowed to fly over here, in peacetime. The maneuvers I did over there, if I did it here, I'd be grounded, and I'd probably lose my wings. I would be endangering my life, the cost of the aircraft, and a lot of people on the ground.

Over there, we not only did them, we did them at night, we did them in the weather, and we did them in unruly terrain, and we did them at low altitudes. You try to do a spiral down—and it's hard to describe this if you don't know a little about aviation—that is the wildest maneuver in the world, and it petrifies me to think about it. We did it at night at 8,000 feet, pulling out at about 1,000 or 500. Now if you wanted to try that in the daylight, with a chase pilot, you'd start about 30,000 feet, and you'd recover by 15,000 feet. Yet, that's what we did at night, below 6,000.

In order to do that, you have to really brainwash—if you want to use that term—train them, psych them, teach them these motor skills that they will perform when a human being is not normally going to perform them. That's what the term "brainwashing" might apply to.

Consequently, they're going to be reported accordingly—I'm not going to come down and say I had target fixation.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you. In the case of Laos, with the survival training that's available, and certainly, I guess, first aid kits that you have and so forth, yet you don't believe that a man could survive for a period of time—having been given, I understand, excellent training in survival training.

LODR COKER. First of all, "excellent training." The training may very well be excellent if (1) the person will take advantage of it, and (2) you're considering the amount of information he's absorbed in a very short period of time, and (3) his retention rate from this is a very small factor of his operating life.

Yes, it's a good training, and I appreciate it, and it helped us a great deal—but to think that now we are prepared the way a Special Forces type is, who does that full time, is out of the question.

Another thing based mostly on reports I've had, is that it is difficult, especially in Laos, to get through there when completely-equipped, with everything you need.

If you had to go across 300 miles undetected, that in itself would be a phenomenal feat. Now, you go down in that, as an aviator, with that medical kit, which is just a little emergency kit, without the type of equipment and clothing that you really need—you have some, for general emergency, or general survival stuff, but it certainly isn't being well equipped.

Top that off with possibly being injured, and you really aren't trained that well for living like that. So, you say, is it possible? You're damn right, anything is possible, but to say you have a very good chance, no, I can't say that you do. Especially when I have to go under the assumption that the guy has probably about a 90 percent chance of being injured. And as soon as you're injured, your odds just disappear off the wrong end of the scale.

Mrs. POWERS. Is that all your questions, George?

Mr. BROOKS. You don't believe, then, out of 360 men who disappeared in Laos that any of them are, in fact, alive today?

LODR COKER. I'm inclined to think not. Let me say something here, an approach that I have to life in general. This is something that I learned; it was also beaten into me over a long period of time. I pointed out today a lot of mistakes that we made, and I was part of making a lot of them.

At that time we did the best we could with the facts we had available, with the ability that we had to do the best we could. For better or for worse, that's what we decided on.

Now it's 7 years later, we look back and say, well, some things we did wrong. All right, it would be nice if we hadn't done them that way. Now we're faced with taking that data and saying, now where do we go from here?

Okay, number one, I really do think that most of those people are dead. To say that every single one is, I can't say that, because there's always a chance. There might even be a reasonable chance that some might be alive, though we have absolutely nothing to substantiate it, and we have all kinds of data to indicate that they probably will not be.

Now, what am I going to do today? Am I going to live my life based on what is best determined today, to be a small possibility, or on what appears to be the real story? We may make a mistake today.

In other words, if for some reason—because they're talking, they're saying everybody is dead—we close up shop, we will all go home, we'll go to the club and have a few beers and forget it. Then tomorrow, 5,000 POW's pop up alive in Laos. Well, we were dead wrong.

Today we have to make the best decision that we can, based on what we have today. To me, that does not indicate to operate on the idea that there are a lot of people alive, or that you're going to be able to account for a fantastic number of them.

We can't account for a good chunk of them; I seriously doubt that any of them are alive, down almost to a man. I believe that personally, myself. I can't ask you to believe that every single one, to a man, isn't alive because, an exception could always exist.

However, we've got to operate today with the best that we have. My understanding says we've got to proceed, assuming that they are dead, virtually to a man, and hoping that we can account for a good number of them.

If you want me to support more than that, I can't logically do it. Tomorrow, it could change. We can make mistakes today just like we did last time.

Mrs. KELLOGG. I'm trying to, in my own mind—of course, I really can't evaluate it totally until I sit down and read the transcript like anyone else in this room [inaudible], but I'd like to go away with one answer in that, what I got out of it was that he was basically trying to say if we're going to do something, do it constructively, if we're going to do anything.

Is that what you were trying to say—I mean, as a family member, as a concerned citizen—is this what you came here for, to tell us that if we're going to do something, be constructive, or just stop and let the government do it—I think I know what you were trying to convey, but I'm not really sure.

Mrs. POWERS. In a couple of words, Lori, I think it was "be realistic."

LCDR COKER. You asked me so I will try to give some guidance or direction. If you want my opinions, then yes, definitely, whatever you do, you've got to be objective. And more than anything else, hopefully, I've given you a better insight into what it was like from the beginning to the end in Southeast Asia.

You are faced with a very unpleasant decision to make, to say the least. Most of you appear to be accepting the fact that your missing man is dead. Some of you may very well still say, no, I think he's alive. I'm hoping to discourage that, not because I don't want him to come home alive any more than you didn't want me to come home alive.

I think it is unrealistic. It's only going to be misery for yourself to harbor something—things which I think are totally unrealistic. What could be tougher, is that you now, primarily, want the accounting, and realizing that it's going to be difficult to the point of being impossible to get it. You're going to have to live with that, too.

Partially this is for the physical reasons I told you about, and partially for the political. The political problem being again, over there. North Vietnam and communism, not because of political problems here, unless you want to call it that when Congress has stripped the President of all his power. That's the only political issue that might exist here that I can think of. Because we are doing everything we can in the State Department and in all of DOD.

To the point, I think, if you get down to nickels and dimes, to the point of being downright unreasonable. We do believe in human dignity, and we are doing it, at a great deal of cost to try and get an accounting. Now you're going to live with this, that in some cases, there is not going to be any accounting. Now, what are you going to do?

I'm doing the best I can to share with you that total experience, so you can go back and reflect again—there will not be new information, but you can go back and look at all that information and try to say, "Okay, let's stop and start again. What do I really have here?"

This is the report. Now I understand that the report might not be factual. For many reasons. None of them because anyone was trying to be mean or nasty. They were trying to be very charitable. But that's the report, somewhat shaky. What can I honestly expect to have happened? And now I'm going to have to live my life from there.

I hope I have helped you in that way. That was my primary objective.

Mrs. WEST. I wanted to say that I'm probably very naive, but it took a trip to Laos for me to understand completely what my son was fighting, and I came home feeling a lot better about the whole situation. If he's dead, I know what he died for, and I know this is a very easy way to rationalize, but nevertheless, I had to go through that, and I had to develop a whole pattern of thinking.

I saw the people in Laos; I saw them from as far north as we were allowed to go to almost as far south as we were allowed to go, and I watched those people, and I identified with them, and I know that those people were overrun, as was South Vietnam, and I'm just wondering how soon Thailand will go.

Communism is our enemy; it's our mortal enemy; their approach is very insidious, and you need to be reminded time and time again. That's my personal feeling.

I had a couple of technical questions to ask: I didn't hear you mention anything about radio signals and why so frequently radio signals were not heard from men who were captured and returned POWs.

LCDR COKER. That one I can answer; it applied to me as well as lots of other men. Talk about brainwashing an aviator, this would be a good example of it. We had a very beautiful radio; the best radio we've had in years and years—nice little pocket-sized thing, not much bigger than a big pack of cigarettes. All you had to do was pull out the antenna, and press the button. Beautiful radio. One problem: You break the antenna, you're dead. You want to know how many times I was told that? I hate to tell you.

I'd never picked it up that I was not told that. I never carried it that I wasn't told that. "Don't break the antenna." Okay, now, this is a thought process that went through my mind when I'm coming down in the chute. This is all being done, now, mechanically, because I am, in fact, in a state of shock.

As a matter of fact, I'm hanging limp in my chute; I pull the ejection curtain; I don't remember anything until I'm hanging limp in the chute in a state of shock.

In my mind, I'm looking down, I know I'm going to be on the ground in 10, maybe 15 seconds. I'm not going to have long. If that radio is out with the antenna open, I'm going to fall and probably break it. So, what did I decide to do? The radio stays there, as soon as I get on the ground, then I'll get it out. Because I'm not going to break that damned antenna.

[Laughter.]

Now, I'm not so sure that made any difference. I could have got out a call to say hey, this is Coker, I'm in a chute. Well, you say that would have been a tremendous blessing. Would it? What would have happened—if at any one of those points along the line where I happened to live, I died instead—had the radio call's gone out.

Then my parents would have got the absolute—he is a POW, he's alive, he had a good chute, don't sweat it—and 7 years later, he's along with a lot of other people right now that you have pictures, or whatever, and he's dead, or at least, he's not home.

It does point out the type of training and the way you can react to it. It'll explain why you don't get some transmissions. Then what happens if you do get some. He is down on the ground, he did get it out, he's walking around and he breaks the antenna. Then no more radio talk obviously.

Combine all of this with planes not being in the vicinity; it is a good radio, but it doesn't have that much range, you almost have to point it sometimes. So there are many reasons that you might not get radio transmissions.

Many were dead or captured immediately. If we got radio transmissions, generally we picked them up. That's what you forget, you see. If we have all those things going for us, we came home, okay.

Col. ALBRIGHT. George, did you have a parachute-operated beeper? In your day, when you went down?

LCDR COKER. No, that was an Air Force gimmick.

Col. ALBRIGHT. The Navy picked them up later, didn't they?

LCDR COKER. I'm not sure—well, it may be good; it may be bad. The way it is now, it's good. I did not like the Air Force gimmick at that time. However, the plane automatically has a beeper if the ejection seats go out; it starts on its emergency broadcast signal—and that's only good as long as the plane's in the air, and in my case, it was not very long. Of course, I wasn't in the air very long, either.

If you hear the signal, the same thing happens. You would think it would answer questions, but it winds up causing more questions than answers, because if you hear a beeper, you're looking for something. Well, often he's captured right away, and often he's killed right away.

It's such a confusing, complicated problem that you can't isolate any one question, but there are a lot of reasons why you would not have gotten signals. I say the biggest one is when you've got signals, the man was picked up.

The rescue attempts are phenomenal. I don't know if you've had a chance to look into them. Practically unbelievable. If you wanted to be really cold-

hearted, and count nickels and dimes the way the communists do, we wouldn't try a lot of those. A lot of guys were lost trying to rescue people, but we rescued a lot, too. It wasn't a complete, foolish attempt. We came out winners there.

Mrs. VINSON. I would just like to say that I very much appreciate what you've had to say, and I think it's been very realistic, and I think, you know, realistic on the chances of survival over there, and realistic about what can be done.

Mrs. POWERS. Any further questions?

Mrs. EVANS. I just want to say one thing. George asked the question about this business about where George Coker said that some people, you know, kind of said, "I feel sorry, let's let the wife get some money." I can give you a positive instance of that, George, because I—you asked George Coker a question about, you couldn't believe that anybody would say that, or do this out of the kindness of their heart.

I gave a speech 3 years ago at Travis Air Force Base, and had a colonel sit next to me, and tell me, "My dear, I want you to know I was in charge of a base in Thailand, and nobody in that base, for a whole year, was ever declared KIA, because we know you wives need the money." I said: "You did us a great disservice, then."

In the beginning of the war, and even now, there's still some people who think Missing in Action goes on for 1 year, and they think, "Isn't that nice?" You know, we did something for the wife, or the family. Mother, father, or whatever. You don't want to be the guy to say the guy is dead. Nobody wants to do that.

Mrs. VINSON. Oh, I know that's true; I know that's true in my case. The wing commander helped me financially to be an MIA wife.

Mr. HOPPER. Let me make a point here. This concerns what you people—and it may not sound good to you, but you're getting a bad name also, because one of the basic principles of the military is you never desert your comrade in arms.

LCDR COKER. You're hurting.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HOPPER. I know I'm hurting; and I don't intend to hurt. I'm laying the facts on the line just like you have laid them on the line to us today.

There are over 1,300 men that are not accounted for. The simple fact that you fail to mention, any time that you speak to a group, fail to mention the MIA accounting implies that you do not care in any way, shape, or form about them.

LCDR COKER. I said you were hurting, and you really are, because this is something we have to live with, too. We were very concerned about being left behind personally; we're still concerned about it now, not that we believe anybody's alive, but we'd certainly like an accounting.

In all honesty, I don't think we can concur with complete harmony. In your mind, you are prepared—most people, I think are prepared to say that their man is dead, but they would like that accounting to be sure. I don't need that, because I am sure. In that respect, we are not alike, and this, of course, will influence my motivation or direction.

Obviously, you will be more motivated, because you have to have that accounting to be sure in your own mind. We are different there. We just don't know what to do sometimes. We know from past experience, and we can see it right now—the handwriting on the wall—that the MIA issue, not it per se, but it as part of Southeast Asia, is going to come in conflict with several of our national objectives, and then what are we going to do?

That's what terrifies us. We don't like it, because Mark is absolutely right. We can sit here and say this as emotionally as we want; how can the most powerful nation in the world let this happen? Well, we were asking this in 1965 and 1966, how can the most powerful nation in the world fool around with such a little Mickey Mouse over there? We could have smashed them any day of the week that we wanted, but we didn't.

As one self-made philosopher came up with: Never in the course of human history has a power so exerted self-control and temperance in dealing with an enemy so vastly weaker than itself.

I'm inclined to think that a solid détente with Russia will support the MIA issue. I can get as many opinions here as there are people in the room, but I certainly can't turn around and oppose them, or suggest, as you had mentioned earlier, that we should write letters to kill this. For all I know, you may be killing yourself.

I'm not in a position to make that decision, so I have to support those people that I trust can make a good decision. I cannot personally tie the Russian political-economic situation to the MIA issue. I am personally pretty confident that those people making these decisions take that into account.

I really wish I could share some of the stories with you that I'm aware of. The government is so highly concerned about this—nothing happens in the Pentagon that the MIA issue is not considered—even if you're talking to people that have nothing to do with it.

Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm idealistic, or maybe I'm just too rightist in support of the establishment, but I can't go into a single room up there that people don't think about the MIA. When they make their decisions, they're not forgetting you. They may not support you because they think something else takes priority, but I am confident that, whether it be President Nixon, or whether it be Secretary Kissinger, or anybody else, that those guys are thinking about the MIA's.

Their decisions take that into account whether it's to the good or to the detriment of the MIAs. If it's to the detriment, it's because they think deep down with gut feeling it's best for the nation at large. I can't criticize that concept.

Mrs. ESTES. What is going to happen to our youth? Mr. Mills is working on this freedom walk. He has these high school youngsters to run for an accounting of our MIAs.

We have two grandsons who are athletes. One has graduated from high school, and is going to go to college, and the other is a junior in high school. These two boys have gone through our grief, and when the lists came out, the whole family was there, waiting for the Navy man to come and tell us, our casualty officer.

They have seen what their mother and their grandparents have gone through. How on earth could I say to those boys: "Yes, I want you to join the Navy like your uncle?" They won't do it. You're having a youth problem right this very minute on the University of Michigan campus. They have bumper stickers already for impeachment.

How are we going to convince our youth, this is the very best country, and that we do want you to be militarily strong; not number two, but number one. How are we going to do it?

LCDR COKER. There are a lot of ways we can do it, and I think in some ways, I've already answered both your points. That is precisely the reason that this is my primary concern over the MIA issue. I have talked to high schools as much as anybody. I have probably spoken to well over 100 groups, and probably well over 50 schools, and that is because I detect that same lack of confidence, that same upset attitude, especially in view of the political situation today.

That is why my number one issue with them is principle, ideals, guidance, confidence.

Mrs. ESTES. If they go into the service, and they are lost, we're not going to bother to account for them. They're just going to be left, we don't know where, in some watery grave, we won't be able to bring them back; they might be in prison; they won't be coming back.

LCDR COKER. This is an issue, and it's going to be more of a headache in the military itself, believe me, we're sweating this. However, are we going to be worried about it at all if the nation completely falls apart due to the lack of confidence? We're not going to be worried about MIA's or POW's or anything, then, because we're no longer going to exist.

So the first priority in my own mind, and the way I am helping you, I hope, to the best of my ability, is first instilling the confidence before I worry about all the other political issues. I try to give them the benefit of something I learned in a very difficult place; and they seem to appreciate it fantastically, concerning their attention, the time, the questions, and the comments that come afterwards.

Mrs. POWERS. Commander Coker, thank you very much. I know I speak for the Board when I tell you how deeply grateful we are that you have given so generously of your time today.

[Whereupon, the meeting was recessed.]

[From the Washington Star, Oct. 30, 1975]

MISSIONARIES SUFFERED MORE THAN THEY SAID

LOS ANGELES (AP).—A report by a church that sponsored five missionaries held captive by the Vietnamese Communists along with nine other persons said the prisoners were treated much more harshly than they admitted after being freed, according to the Los Angeles Times.

The 14 civilians—nine Americans and five foreigners—were released in Bangkok, Thailand, on Oct. 30.

The Times, which said it had obtained a copy of the Christian Church Ministry and Alliance Church report, said yesterday that the captives did not tell the true story of their treatment by the Communists when they were released because they were "euphoric" at being free.

The report said the missionaries were kept "under utterly uncivilized, primitive and bare survival conditions . . . strange and contrary to international law."

The Division of Overseas Ministries for the church, which has its headquarters in New York, planned to make the report public today, the Times said.

A missionary couple, interviewed by the Times on Friday as the two were reunited with their four children, corroborated the report.

Richard Phillips, 45, and his wife, Lillian, 44, said each captive lost 20 to 50 pounds on a skimpy diet of rice and most became sick "to the point of death."

They said they slept on wet ground and often had no privacy.

They "screamed with pain" as huge black ants "crawled all over us and bit us" while the group made a night march through the jungle, Mrs. Phillips said.

A thousand prisoners used one latrine with three holes at a camp where the captives were kept for 33 days. Eventually it was "mercifully enlarged to 10 holes," Mrs. Phillips said. She said many of the prisoners were South Vietnamese soldiers.

They were never assaulted and saw no evidence of atrocities, Mrs. Phillips said, adding that their treatment could be considered normal "under the circumstances."

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD R. FERNANDEZ, CONSULTANT TO THE MIDDLE EAST WORKING GROUP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

WHAT ARE OUR ASSUMPTIONS

Our assumptions go a long way toward determining what we will do, how we will act, and the manner in which we will look at a particular problem. The hardest task that this committee faces in these early days of deliberations and hearings is to come to a common agreement as to what you all seem reasonably clear about. Failure to do this will make any other work of the Select Committee futile, cause frustration amongst the staff and, more importantly, be perceived by MIA families as one more in a long line of governmental failures. You don't need that, the MIA families don't want that, and I would not be here today if I thought that you were somehow or other predestined for failure. Your agreed-upon assumptions are pivotal and for that reason let me suggest what I believe to be irrefutable facts that I would have you consider as the beginning of building a common knowledge base:

(1) There is no data available to suggest that the Vietnamese will assist the U.S. Government in any way with regard to MIA issues unless it is within the broader legal framework of other outstanding issues contained in the Paris Agreements.

(2) Unless one is a racist ("Asians don't care about human life the way Americans do.") there is no other reasonable assumption but that the Vietnamese are refusing to move on the MIA question because of other outstanding issues.

(3) The Ford Administration, correctly sensing less and less interest with regard to the legacies of the Indochina conflict, is presently pursuing a course with regard to the Paris Agreements that at best can be called disinterest.

(4) There is little possibility that any member or staff personnel connected with this Committee will have any kind of positive contact with the Governments of Vietnam on this issue—MIA's.

(5) There is some reason to believe that Americans who are in close communication with the Vietnamese might, if they were clear and in agreement with your Committee's goals and the means by which they are to be pursued, be willing to get clarification on specific issues for the P.R.G. and D.R.V. which would allow the Committee to fulfill its task.

(6) To the extent that there is dormant or real interest on the MIA issue and/or other outstanding issues contained in the Paris Agreements, Americans are more and more prepared to follow a path of reconciliation rather than one of retribution with regard to all of these issues.

(7) While disinterest in the Vietnam war legacies is significant, this is not to suggest all of the MIA organizations and peace organizations have folded up

and gone home. There is important and impressive work still being done by both MIA groups and peace organizations around all outstanding issues in the Paris Agreements.

DATA GATHERING AND BUILDING YOUR CASE

Today's meeting and similar hearings are clearly intended as a means by which the Select Committee will gather information. I am sure that all of you have a variety of other personal contacts and information sources which will enable you to gain even greater perspective on this MIA issue. It is important that you consolidate all of these sources of information into a tentative position. This is important for a number of reasons:

(1) It will be a means for your Committee to be clear as to what it thinks as a committee.

(2) It will be a means by which to carry on discussions/negotiations with other parties.

(3) It will be a means by which you can build allies in and out of government.

(4) Finally, it will make it easier to take a count of new information and insights as they arise. In short, it is hard to integrate new perspectives and information into a vacuous situation.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY, BASED ON THE GOAL OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE AND DATA AVAILABLE

Let me make several observations at this point:

(1) Your goal—and this is but a suggestion—could best be stated as follows: "By September 15, 1976 the House Select Committee on MIA's would like to have a final accounting of all MIA's, missionaries, and newsmen presently missing in Indochina (mostly in Vietnam) realizing that this specific goal can only be adjudicated within the larger context of other outstanding issues remaining from the Paris Agreements."

(2) Even though all of the data isn't in as of this date, you know that I know that there are not a million courses of action that will seem reasonable once you're in a position to develop a strategy based on available information. Let me list several strategies I have come across in Washington, D.C. and in other places over the past several weeks with my response to each one of them. Just as it isn't true that when you're out of Schlitz, you're not really out of beer, this list is not exhaustive.

(a) The Select Committee should rename itself, "The Select Committee to Uphold the Paris Agreements." Proponents of this view argue that the Vietnamese would look more kindly on your work if you renamed yourself in this manner. Believe me, that's all they would do—they still won't negotiate with you and probably will not even meet with you should you change your name. More importantly, however, you know and I know that you wouldn't get this name change past the House of Representatives.

(b) You could start a propaganda campaign against the Vietnamese a la Ross Perot. This would get some press attention in the United States. It would not move the Vietnamese nor, probably, the 123 countries that the United Nations who recently voted for the admission of both Vietnams to the U.N.

(c) Attempt to lobby with the State Department/President Ford so that they would become more active in their concern over the MIA issue. Again, the lobbyists on this issue have been many and vociferous—and their failure to gain a final accounting of all MIA's has not received much public attention in recent days. There is little evidence to suggest that your energies in this direction would be any more successful.

(d) Given the firm position of both the Vietnamese and our government, you could issue a report saying that there is no use for such a small committee such as your own continuing, and then you could close up shop within six months. To do this would overlook the essential fact that the work of your Committee is of interest to a wide variety of persons and groups in the United States and, unlike the Vietnamese, you have the potential to change policy here at home to resolve the MIA issue as well as other outstanding issues.

(e) You could develop a strategy, which is supported by your data, that aims at changing U.S. policy on the Paris Agreements. Clearly, and this should be of no surprise to the Committee members, I believe that this strategy holds some possibility of success.

CHANGING U.S. POLICY ON THE MIA ISSUE

There are several assets that this Committee has which would go a long way in enabling it to change U.S. policy with regard to the MIA issue. Let me simply list them:

- (1) President Ford's seeming openness to allow Congress to participate/influence/shape American policy in conjunction with the State Department and his own Office.
- (2) As we move into an election year there would be nothing but positive pay-offs for most politicians. If there seemed to be a way emerging of finally putting all of the issues with regard to Vietnam behind us through the successful adjudication of all the outstanding issues in the Paris Agreements.
- (3) A broad coalition of groups might come together to support an effort to resolve all of these matters and I think particularly of various MIA groups, major Protestant denominations, several labor unions, and, of course, many peace organizations as well.
- (4) The force of such a coalition in an election year, would be ominous for any politician to try to overcome.

FOUR QUESTIONS DEALING WITH CHANGE

As someone who has worked for various kinds of change over the past twenty years there are four basic questions that I always ask myself, with regard to attempting to change either an institution, a policy, or even, for that matter, a small group:

1. Is there a clear goal that we can agree upon?
2. Are there sufficient resources to work on this goal?
3. Are there enough real and potential allies to help us work on our goal?
4. Does the particular strategy that we are about to embark on to accomplish our goal have the highest possibility of success among all the other strategies we could choose?

I would submit to the Select Committee that on all of these questions I believe that you can answer in the affirmative. The question is, of course, what strategy will you embark on?

Let me end with a personal note. I have seen too much of the pain of the Vietnam War years. I have visited and spent time with various POW and MIA families in various parts of the country. I helped to bury a young man in a gravesite outside of Denver, Colorado who died in Vietnam, and have visited deserters both in Canada and in Sweden. I have also been in both Vietnams and Laos during and after the war. I can attest to the kind of destruction that went on there from the high altitude bombing in the Plain of Jars to the villages of North Vietnam as well as Saigon itself. I want to make very clear to this Committee that I think Americans in large numbers are ready to put behind past differences in order to resolve these outstanding issues that remain from that conflict. I know that you will receive wide public support all over this nation if you choose to embark on a course that really does help to bring reconciliation not only to the MIA families who have borne quite enough pain, but also between the Vietnams and our own country whose bond in the dreadful war we have just concluded needs to be built up on the bond of peace in the years ahead.

I am indebted to the Center for Social Action, the United Church of Christ, for administrative help in preparing this statement although neither the Center nor any other organization mentioned above is responsible in any way for the views expressed here. They are mine and mine alone.

PROPOSED RULE 2.12 OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Whenever any hearing or meeting conducted by the Committee or any subcommittee is open to the public, the Committee or subcommittee, as the case may be, may permit by majority vote that hearing or meeting to be covered, in whole or in part, by television broadcast, radio broadcast, and still photography, or by any such methods of coverage, under the following rules:

- (a) If the television or radio coverage of the hearing or meeting is to be presented to the public as live coverage, that coverage shall be conducted and presented without commercial sponsorship.

(b) No witness served with a subpoena by the Committee or subcommittee, as the case may be, shall be required against his will to be photographed at any hearing or meeting or to give evidence or testimony while the broadcasting of that hearing or meeting, by radio or television, is being conducted. At the request of any such witness who does not wish to be subjected to radio, television, or still photography coverage, all lenses shall be covered and all microphones used for coverage turned off.

(c) Not more than four television cameras, operating from fixed positions, shall be permitted in a hearing room. The allocation among the television media of the positions of the number of television cameras permitted in a hearing room shall be in accordance with fair and equitable procedures devised by the Executive Committee of the Radio and Television Correspondents' Galleries.

(d) Television cameras shall be placed so as not to obstruct in any way the space between any witness giving evidence or testimony and any Members of the Committee or subcommittee, as the case may be, or the visibility of that witness and that Member to each other.

(e) Television cameras shall not be placed in positions which obstruct unnecessarily the coverage of the hearing or meeting by the other media.

(f) Equipment necessary for coverage by the television and radio media shall not be installed in, or removed from, the hearing room while the Committee or subcommittee, as the case may be, is in session.

(g) Floodlights, spotlights, and flashguns shall not be used in providing any method of coverage of the hearing or meeting, except that the television media may install additional lighting in the hearing room, without cost to the Government, in order to raise the ambient lighting level in the hearing room to the lowest level necessary to provide adequate television coverage of the hearing at the then current state of the art of television coverage.

(h) Not more than five press photographers shall be permitted to cover a hearing or meeting by still photography. In the selection of these photographers, preference shall be given to photographers from Associated Press Photos and the United Press International Newspictures. If request is made by more than five media for coverage of the hearing for still photography, that coverage shall be made on the basis of a fair and equitable pool arrangement devised by the Standing Committee of Press Photographers.

(i) Photographers shall not position themselves, at any time during the course of the hearing or meeting, between the witness table and the Members of the Committee or subcommittee, as the case may be.

(j) Photographers shall not place themselves in positions which obstruct unnecessarily the coverage of the hearing or meeting by the other media.

(k) Personnel providing coverage by the television and radio media shall be then currently accredited to the Radio and Television Correspondents' Galleries.

(l) Personnel providing coverage by still photography shall be then currently accredited to the Press Photographers' Gallery.

(m) Personnel providing coverage by the television and radio media and by still photography shall conduct themselves and their coverage activities in an orderly and unobstrusive manner.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF WITNESSES

RICHARD R. FERNANDEZ

My name is Richard Fernandez and I am a minister in the United Church of Christ. At the present time I am a consultant to the Middle East Working Group of the National Council of Churches. Formerly, from 1966-73 I was the Executive Director of Clergy and Laity Concerned, an inter-religious peace organization which came into existence in opposition to the war in Vietnam. I am a U.S. Army veteran (1954-56) and at the present time make my home in Philadelphia with my wife and three sons.

During my more than seven years of work with Clergy and Laity Concerned my contact with the Vietnamese included one trip to Laos and North Vietnam and three different meetings with the P.R.G. and/or D.R.V. Delegations in Paris. More recently, as some of you know, I went with three other Americans to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Republic of North Vietnam and the first one during peacetime—this during the last week of August and first week of September of this year. Additionally, I was a member of the Committee of Liaison which was the avenue by which the D.R.V. chose to have American POW's and their families communicate with one another. I personally carried several hundred letters in and out of North Vietnam during my visit in 1970 and, before Christmas of 1970 (it may have been 1971) brought back from the D.R.V. Delegation in Paris more than one thousand letters from POW's to their families in the United States.

MRS. IRIS R. POWERS

Mother and primary next-of-kin of CWO Lowell S. Powers, USA, missing in South Vietnam since 2 April 1969; and Dr. Terry A. Powers, economist for the Inter-American Development Bank.

Mrs. Powers served as National Coordinator from the incorporation of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia until its First Annual Meeting in October 1970. She was a Board Member from incorporation until July 1974; Chairman of the League's Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Readjustment Committee 1972-1974; Chairman of the Board of Directors 1973-1974.

In February 1971 she was appointed by General William C. Westmoreland, Army Chief of Staff, as his special consultant for POW/MIA Next-of-Kin Affairs and for the next 5 months traveled to 27 Army Posts throughout the United States where she briefed the senior staff, held press conferences, and counseled Army next-of-kin, both individually and in groups. She drafted and caused to be published DA Pamphlets 608-33, "Survivor Assistance Officer and Family Services Assistance Officer Handbook," and 608-34, "Handbook for Next-of-Kin of Army Prisoners of War/Missing Personnel."

Mrs. Powers was also a consultant to the Navy's Neuropsychiatric Unit's Center for Prisoner of War Studies from 1971 to 1975. At present she is Director of Personnel, Recruitment and Training, Ace-Federal Reporters, Inc., Washington's largest court reporting firm.

MRS. WILMER GRUBB

Evelyn Grubb is the mother of four sons: Jeffrey, 19; Roland, 14; Stephen, 12; and Roy, 9, who was born five months after his father, LTC Wilmer Grubb was captured. She was National Coordinator of the League from October 1971 to October 1972, and a member of the Board of Directors 1972-1973. Her husband, an Air Force reconnaissance pilot, was shot down January 26, 1966. His status was changed from "missing" to "captured" in February 1966 when his pictures

and a tape recording made in captivity were released to the world press from North Vietnam.

In 1967 Mrs. Grubb joined the Virginia Beach wives' group and participated in POW/MIA activities. In 1970 she was notified by the Committee of Liaison, Cora Weiss' group, that her husband was dead. Fearing the same fate might befall other POWs, Mrs. Grubb, with League sponsorship, submitted a single-signature petition to the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations on behalf of all prisoners of war and missing in action. In March 1971 a class petition was submitted to the same Committee. She met with Secretary General U Thant and, later, Kurt Waldheim. Her travels abroad and efforts on behalf of the missing are numerous and documented.

Mrs. Grubb's personal dilemma was finally resolved when her husband's remains were returned, along with 22 others, to the United States. After positive identification was made, her husband was buried in Arlington on April 4, 1974.

Mrs. BOBBY VINSON

Joan Vinson, wife of Col. Bobby Vinson, USAF, missing in action since April 24, 1968, is the mother of four children: Charles, 21; Robert, 19; Vicki, 17; and Laura, 12.

Mrs. Vinson served as the first Assistant National Coordinator of the League of Families after incorporation, then National Coordinator from 1970-1971, and a Board Member through 1972. She was the originator and Director of the Non-partisan Political Action Committee in 1972 and worked with family members in all 50 states to bring the POW/MIA issue to the electorate. This Committee also worked to elect League members as delegates to the Republican and Democratic Conventions. She testified before the Platform Committees of both parties to insure that the League's message was included in their respective platforms.

Mrs. Vinson was associated with the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration and while there was appointed by President Ford to serve on the Presidential Clemency Board.

In May of 1970, when National Coordinator of the League, she coordinated a group of 175 League members making a trip to Geneva, Paris, and other European countries to publicize and seek assistance from foreign governments on behalf of the prisoners of war and missing in action.

DR. HENRY J. KENNY

A graduate of the United States Military Academy and of American University, Dr. Kenny completed a one-year course in Vietnamese in 1964. He was Assistant Professor for International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Problems of Developing Nations from 1970-1973. Prior to joining the Committee staff he was Executive Secretary of the President's Interagency Committee on Export Expansion.

MAJ. GEN. ROBERT C. KINGSTON

Robert Charles Kingston was born in Brookline, Massachusetts 16 July 1928. He entered the US Army as an enlisted man in November 1948. The following year he attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Riley, Kansas, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant of Infantry on 20 December 1949.

Between 1950 and 1954, General Kingston served as platoon leader, company executive officer, and company commander in the 3d Battalion, 32d Infantry in Korea. During his second tour in Korea, he was the Commanding Officer, Far East Command Special Mission Group.

In 1954 and 1955, General Kingston served as Executive Officer, Ranger Mountain Camp, Dahlonga, Georgia. From 1958 to 1959, he served as an Airborne Infantry Company Commander and as the Assistant Division G2 in the 82d Airborne Division. In 1960, General Kingston completed the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In 1960 and 1961, he served as the Exchange Airborne Officer with the 16th Independent Parachute Group, United

Kingdom. During that tour, he commanded C Company, 3d Para (Battalion) for nine months.

In August 1961, General Kingston was assigned to the Operations Division, Headquarters, US Army, Europe. In June 1963, he was reassigned to the United States to the Test and Evaluation Group, United States Army Airmobile Test Unit, Fort Benning, Georgia. He attended the University of Omaha in 1965 where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in General Education; the same year he entered the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, Virginia, graduating in January 1966. He was next assigned to Vietnam and initially served as Senior Advisor to the Army of Vietnam Ranger Command. Later, on the same tour, for nine months he commanded the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. Following this command assignment he served in the Studies and Observation Group, Headquarters, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, from March 1967 to September 1967.

In 1967, General Kingston was assigned as Chief of General Planning Branch, Plans and Programs Directorate, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Headquarters, Department of the Army. During 1968-1969 he attended the National War College, Washington, D.C. In 1969, he received his Master of Science degree in Foreign Relations from George Washington University. Upon completion of National War College studies, he assumed command of the 3d Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

General Kingston returned to Vietnam in late 1969 as Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). He commanded this brigade for six months and subsequently commanded that Division's 1st Brigade for an additional three months.

In 1970, General Kingston was assigned as the Deputy Secretary of the General Staff, Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Army. In 1972, he attended the Advanced Management Program for Executives, University of Pittsburgh. In June of 1972, General Kingston returned to Vietnam where he was promoted to brigadier general and served as Deputy Commanding General, Second Regional Assistance Command and as Deputy Senior Advisor, II Corps and Military Region 2. On 23 January 1973, General Kingston assumed command of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand.

Upon his return to the United States, General Kingston assumed duties as Assistant Division Commander, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kansas on 4 February 1974. He assumed command of the US Army John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance and the US Army Institute for Military Assistance, Fort Bragg, North Carolina on 1 October 1975.

PERSONAL DATA

Date and Place of Birth: 16 July 1928, Brookline, Massachusetts. Father: John J. Kingston, Sr. (deceased). Mother: Mary Shehan Kingston (deceased). Marriage: Josephine Rhae. Children: George R. Cody, step-son, Mrs. Leslie C. Reiman, step-daughter.

EDUCATION

Officer Candidate School, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1949. Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1959. University of Omaha, 1964-1965, (BA). Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia, 1965-1966. National War College, Washington, D.C., 1968-1969. George Washington University, 1969 (MS). Advanced Management Program for Executives, University of Pittsburgh, 1972.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PROMOTIONS

	Temporary (AUS)	Permanent (RA)
2d lieutenant.....	Dec. 20, 1949	Dec. 20, 1949
1st lieutenant.....	Feb. 1, 1951	Dec. 20, 1952
Captain.....	July 2, 1954	Dec. 20, 1956
Major.....	Sept. 30, 1960	Dec. 20, 1963
Lieutenant colonel.....	May 11, 1964	Dec. 20, 1970
Colonel.....	Nov. 15, 1968	Dec. 20, 1974
Brigadier general.....	Dec. 29, 1972	
Major general.....	June 1, 1973	

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS

	From—	To—
Rifle platoon leader, company commander ranger instructor, Abn. Inf. Co., Div. Asst. G-2.	December 1949.....	August 1960.
Unit commander/exchange officer, 16th Independent Parachute Bde., England.	August 1960.....	August 1961.
Special planning staff branch, operations Division, U.S. Army, Europe.	August 1961.....	May 1963.
Air assault test and evaluation officer, U.S. Army Airmobile Test Unit, Fort Benning, Ga.	June 1963.....	July 1964.
University of Omaha (Nebraska).	August 1964.....	July 1965.
Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va.	August 1965.....	January 1966.
Senior adviser, RVNAF Ranger High Command, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.	February 1966.....	May 1966.
Commanding officer, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, Vietnam.	May 1966.....	March 1967.
Studies and observation group, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.	March 1967.....	September 1967.
Chief of General Planning Branch, Plans Programs Directorate, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, DA.	October 1967.....	August 1968.
National War College, Washington, D.C.	August 1968.....	August 1969.
Commanding officer, 3d Special Forces Group (Abn), 1st Special Forces, Fort Bragg, N.C.	August 1969.....	November 1969.
Commanding officer, 3d and 1st Brigades, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Vietnam.	November 1969.....	August 1970.
Deputy Secretary of the General Staff, Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.	November 1970.....	March 1972.
Advanced management program for executives, University of Pittsburgh.	March 1972.....	May 1972.
Deputy Commanding General, 2d Regional Assistance Command and deputy senior adviser, II ARVN Corps and Military Region II, Vietnam.	June 1972.....	January 1973.
Commander, Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand.	January 1973.....	December 1973.
Assistant division commander, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kans.	February 1974.....	September 1975.
Commander, U.S. Army, John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance, and Commandant, U.S. Army Institute for Military Assistance, Fort Bragg, N.C.	October 1975.....	Present.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star with first Oak Leaf Cluster, Legion of Merit with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star with Valor Device and one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with 35 Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Commendation Medal with first Oak Leaf Cluster, Army of Occupation Medal (Japan), National Defense Service Medal with first Oak Leaf Cluster, Korean Service Medal with eight Battle Stars, United Nations Service Medal, U.S. Presidential Unit Citation, Naval Presidential Unit Citation, U.S. Valorous Unit Award, Combat Infantryman Badge (Second Award), Master Parachutist Badge, U.S. Ranger Tab, Gliderman Badge, U.S. Army General Staff Identification Badge, National Order of Vietnam (Fourth Class), National Order of Vietnam (Fifth Class), Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm (Individual) (Six Awards), Vietnamese Honor Medal (First Class), Vietnamese Civil Action Medal (First Class), Vietnamese Service Medal, Vietnamese Campaign Medal with nine Battle Stars, Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm (Unit) (Three Awards), Korean Presidential Unit Citation, Korean Parachutist Badge, Parachute Wings, United Kingdom, Cambodian Parachutist Badge, Vietnamese Jumpmaster Badge, Vietnamese Ranger Badge, and 12 Overseas Bars.

PAUL A. STRUHARIK

Born November 4, 1940, Barberton, Ohio.

Education.—Wittenburg University in Ohio, Palomar Junior College in California, B.A. San Diego State University in California.

Work experience.—1965-69: Served in the U.S. Army, Vietnam, leaving with the rank of First Lieutenant. 1969-75: Area Development Officer with the Agency for International Development (AID) Darlac Province, South Vietnam. 1975: Captured on March 12 by North Vietnamese forces at Ban Me Thuot. 1975: Released on October 30 in Hanoi and returned to the United States October 31.

Currently assigned in AID office in Washington, D.C.

REPORTS PREPARED BY BIOTECHNOLOGY, INC., FOR THE OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The following reports entitled "A Review of Problems Encountered in the Recovery of Navy Airmen Under Combat Conditions", dated June 1973; "Aircraft Escape and Survival Experiences of Navy Prisoners of War", dated August 1974; and "The Biomedical Aspects of Combat Aircraft Escape and Survival for Navy Prisoners of War", dated April 5, 1975, were prepared by BioTechnology, Inc., Falls Church, Va., under the auspices of the Office of Naval Research Washington, D.C.]

(143)

OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH

Contract No. N00014-72-C-0101

Task No. NR 105-667

Final Report

**A REVIEW OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED
IN THE RECOVERY OF NAVY AIRCREWMEN
UNDER COMBAT CONDITIONS**

by

Martin G. Every
James F. Parker, Jr.

June 1973

*Reproduction in whole or in part is permitted
for any purpose of the United States Government*

Distribution of this report is unlimited

BioTechnology, Inc.

3027 ROSEMARY LANE • FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	148
Procedures	151
Population	151
Coding, tabulating, and analysis	152
Results	153
Event data	153
Ejection phase	154
Descent and landing	162
Survival	164
Land	164
Water	164
Rescue	168
Injuries	174
Discussion and recommendations	177
Ejection	177
Descent and landing	180
Survival	181
Water survival	181
Land survival	182
Survival equipment	182
Signalling equipment	182
Rescue	184
Summary	187
Combat recoveries	187
Survivor's recommendations	187
References	189

A REVIEW OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE RECOVERY OF NAVY AIRCREWMEN UNDER COMBAT CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Two basic issues dictate that every aircrewman downed in combat be given an optimum chance for survival and rescue. The first is moral; the second is economic. One need not belabor the moral obligation. The military must safeguard the lives of fighting men. Over and above this, however, the replacement costs for aircrewmens are very high. Recent estimates by the Naval Safety Center show, for example, that replacement cost for a Lieutenant Commander flying in Vietnam operations exceeds one million dollars.

The equipment and procedures utilized by Navy airmen for escape, survival, and rescue following an air combat mishap were rigorously tested during Southeast Asia combat operations. While it is true that an aviator in an aircraft disabled during a combat mission over Southeast Asia had a better chance of avoiding capture or death than in any previous war (Naval Aviation News, June 1967), there is still a great deal of room for improvement. Official statistics for planes destroyed by enemy fire over North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia show approximately 40 percent of the aircrewmens were recovered during the course of the conflict. The rest were classified as missing in action (MIA), killed in action (KIA), or prisoner of war (POW). This low figure is due, partly to the very nature of the event and to the fact that escape and rescue procedures are extremely hazardous and difficult in enemy territory. It is, however, just this point which makes it vitally important to obtain combat area escape, survival, and rescue data from those who have been rescued. These data must serve as the primary base from which to analyze problems associated with aerial combat events in order to continually improve the equipment and procedures which are used in escape and recovery. These improvements must also be based on needs dictated by the problems and stresses inherently found only under combat conditions, as well as by the environmental conditions of the specific combat theater. At the time of this report, the only source available for obtaining first-hand information related to all phases of a combat mishap is the airman who ejected from a stricken aircraft and was subsequently recovered or escaped from captivity.

The flow of data concerning air combat issues in Southeast Asia, unfortunately, has not matched that for noncombat operation and training activities. The information that is available comes, in large part, from reports of personal observations by Flight Surgeons recently returned from duty aboard aircraft carriers operating in the Vietnam theater. This information undoubtedly is of great value but it is not comprehensive. As a result, it cannot be tabulated statistically in the same manner as data collected on a more systematic basis. Medical Officers'

Reports (MOR's), such as those required for training and operational incidents, have not been required in the combat zone in an effort to reduce the burden of administrative matters at critical times. Although this reasoning is valid, it does result in the loss of much valuable combat information concerning ejection, survival, and combat rescue.

The purposes of this study were:

- to collect postemergency combat data directly from the aircrewmens involved in mishaps;
- to use this information in establishing an air combat data base which can be used systematically in dealing with pertinent biomedical issues relating to these survival systems; and
- to analyze these data in order to develop specific recommendations for improvement, as warranted, in rescue procedures and equipment, personal protective and survival equipment, and in the general biomedical support of aviation personnel during combat.

Injury classifications for this report were made using the coding instructions from OPNAVINST 3750.6G:

Major Injury -- Any injury requiring five days or more hospitalization and/or "sick in quarters." Also any of the following, regardless of hospitalization/sick in quarters time:

1. Unconsciousness due to head trauma (transient unconsciousness due to hypoxia, hyperventilation, G forces, etc., are not to be classified as injury).
2. Fractures of any bone except simple fracture of nose or phalanges.
3. Traumatic dislocation of major joints/internal derangement, of the knee.
4. Moderate to severe lacerations resulting in severe hemorrhage, or extensive surgical repair.
5. Injury to any internal organ.
6. Any third degree burns. Any second degree burns involving more than five (5) percent of the body surface. Any friction burn regardless of degree that requires less than five days hospitalization or "sick in quarters" is classified as a minor injury.

Minor Injury -- Any injury less than major which:

1. Results in the loss of 24 hours from full performance of regularly assigned duties, but less than five days.
2. Results in loss of regular working time for civilians beyond the day or shift on which injury occurs.

3. Hospitalization for observation not to exceed 48 hours from the time of admission is not classified as an injury.

No Injury -- Minimal injuries which do not meet the criteria for minor injury.

In those cases where injury description and days hospitalized information left some doubt as to the exact injury classification, the narratives and days grounded information was used to effect a categorization.

It must be stressed at the outset that the group of airmen considered in this study included only those personnel who were successful in dealing with the air-combat mishaps. Consequently, any conclusions reached should be evaluated in light of the fact that the procedures and equipment used worked at least well enough to allow these individuals to be recovered. A complete evaluation cannot be made until comparable data can be gathered from the returned prisoners of war and until some statistics are available for the missing and killed in action.

It is anticipated that data obtained from prisoners of war will complement the data in this study and show that some individuals came very close to rescue. Indications from this study suggest that the difference between rescue and capture may prove to have been the unavailability or inoperative state of a single piece of equipment. It is expected, further, that these reports will verify or at least add credence to many of the problems indicated by the present study.

PROCEDURES

Population

In order to obtain the most meaningful data relevant to the objectives of this study, the "study population" was defined by the following qualifications:

Personnel:	Navy pilots and aircrewmembers
Aircraft:	Fixed wing jet only; restricted to A-4, A-6, A-7, F-4, F-8, and RA-5C aircraft
Area of Loss:	Combat zone of Southeast Asia
Event:	Loss caused by or during enemy action
Status:	Aircrewmembers who were recovered or escaped captivity

A master list of all airmen downed prior to 1 January 1971 was made available from the Center for Naval Analyses. This list was used to obtain the names and disposition of those personnel involved in Southeast Asia air combat mishaps in aircraft equipped with ejection seats. The classifications of the men extracted from this list included:

Recovered:	39%
Prisoner of War:	28%
Missing in Action:	17%
Killed in Action:	16%

An Aviation Combat Casualty Report Form (Form BTI 72-Appendix) was prepared covering all phases of the emergency sequence of events. In order to facilitate comparison with operational data from the Naval Safety Center, every attempt was made to keep this form compatible with the Medical Officers' Report of Aircraft Accident, Incident or Ground Accident Form (Form 3750-7), which is required for all operational aircraft accidents and incidents. The BTI form was pretested on a number of pilots who were not part of the study group. Final testing was accomplished by personal interview with members of the actual study group.

All the survivors with known addresses were sent individual letters along with a copy of the BTI casualty report form and a preaddressed return envelope. Follow-up telephone calls were made to those members whose questionnaires had not been returned by the fourth month and who could be reached by telephone. Additional forms were sent to those who stated they had not received or had mislaid the original form. A second mailing was made approximately seven months after the first mailing. This mailing included questionnaires to a

small group of Navy airmen downed and recovered during the period from 1 January 1971 to 1 August 1972 who were not previously contacted and 39 questionnaires re-sent with up-dated addresses. From the combined mailings, 104 questionnaires were returned.

Coding, Tabulating and Analysis

A coding manual was devised to permit the information from the returned questionnaire to be reduced and transferred onto 80 column punch cards for subsequent computer processing. All categories from the 104 returned questionnaires were tallied and, where appropriate, cross-tallied with other categories. The results from these tallies and comparisons are presented and discussed in this report.

RESULTS

Event Data

The breakdown by aircraft type of the 104 survivors making up this study group was as follows:

Aircraft Type	Number
A-4	43
F-4	25
F-8	16
A-6	8
A-7	8
RA-5C	4

Included in this group were 84 pilots; 19 BN's, RAN's, or RIO's; and one unknown, all of whom exited their aircraft via the ejection seat. The causes of the emergencies necessitating aircraft abandonment included small arms fire, anti-aircraft fire, SAM missiles, and debris from prematurely exploding "friendly ordnance." The common link with all these events was that at the time of initial damage each aircraft was engaged in combat activity over enemy territory and all personnel were forced to eject as a consequence of the damage. The aircraft altitudes, terrain clearances, and attitudes were so varied at the time of initial aircraft damage that there is little point in attempting to gain relevance from this data. The mean airspeeds at the time of initial damage are, however, presented here (Table 1) for later comparison with speeds at time of ejection (Table 4). From this comparison, it is evident that after initial damage, the aircraft could be slowed down considerably before ejections were initiated. It is perhaps the relatively high speeds at the time of initial damage which allowed for the inordinately high recovery success rate of the group studied. This speed was usually sacrificed to gain altitude or distance. Damage to aircraft in enemy territory was normally such that the decision to eject was rapidly made. Any delay in ejection initiation was due to using the time to improve altitude, speed and attitude conditions and, if possible, to reach less hostile territory.

Table 1
Speed at Time of Mishap

	<u>A-4</u>	<u>A-6</u>	<u>A-7</u>	<u>F-4</u>	<u>F-8</u>	<u>RA-5C</u>
Mean speeds	372.4	390.0	399.4	423.8	499.4	566.3

Pre-ejection wounds were responsible for 8.1 percent of the total injuries. More serious injuries were due to shrapnel from enemy ordnance. In one instance this resulted in the traumatic amputation of an arm. The most frequently reported injuries were various degrees of burns of the face and hands combined with smoke inhalation. The airmen reporting burns stressed the importance of wearing the proper clothing and gloves to minimize the seriousness of burns in the cockpit.

Ejection Phase

This phase of the escape sequence proved to be, by far, the most hazardous in terms of injury. In all 104 cases, exit from the aircraft was made via the ejection seat, yet the events surrounding these ejections were greatly diversified. Seat activation was initiated utilizing the face curtain (which is the Navy standard procedure) 77 times; seat-pan handle, 25 times; and unknown, twice.

The predominant reasons for using the seat-pan handle instead of the primary face curtain method included:

1. Pre-ejection injury
2. Trying to maintain control of the aircraft during pre-ejection sequence.
3. Difficulty with the primary system.

The time from onset of the emergency until ejection was initiated varied from two seconds to 60 minutes. Thirty-seven percent of this group ejected within three minutes of the emergency, including 13 cases of ejection within less than one minute and six cases within ten seconds.

The mean times from emergency until ejection initiation, by aircraft type, are shown in Table 2. Once initial control of the aircraft was obtained, the primary reason for further ejection delay was to reach friendly territory. The majority of pilots in this study were successful in accomplishing this objective, with 73 percent reaching open water.

Table 2
Time From Emergency Until Escape Was Initiated

	A-4	A-6	A-7	F-4	F-8	RA-5C
Range	3 sec to 30 min	6 sec to 45 min	2 sec to 8 min	20 sec to 60 min	20 sec to 40 min	45 sec to 4 min
Mean	10.3 min	13.8 min	2.4 min	18.8 min	10.5 min	2.1 min

Speed and altitude at time of ejection for this combat group were compared with operational ejection data obtained from the U.S. Naval Safety Center. These comparisons are presented in tabular form in Tables 3 and 4 and in graphic form in Figures 1 and 2. If the 0 to 500 feet (takeoff and landing mishap) category is omitted from Figure 2, the two sets of data would present very similar curves for ejection altitudes. However, a very different comparison is shown with speeds at time of ejection (where the mean ejection speed under combat conditions is almost 100 miles per hour faster than the operational event). In the critical higher speed ejection range the combat data show approximately 27 percent ejected at speeds greater than 400 mph whereas only five percent of the operational ejections were at speeds greater than 400 mph. When these combat statistics are compared with Southeast Asia Air Force statistics (Shannon, 1969), Navy ejections over 400 knots occur 11.3 percent more frequently than do Air Force ejections. This higher speed at the time of ejection was a primary cause of many injuries and compounded some existing injuries. When ejection injuries are plotted against ejection speeds, the steady shift to major injuries as speed increased over 400 knots is readily apparent (see Table 5).

Table 3

Ejection Speeds for Nonfatal Mishaps
(Combat 1966-1972 Versus Operational 1966-1970)

Speed (Knots)	Combat Type Aircraft						Combat		Operational		
	A-4	A-6	A-7	RA-5C	F-4	F-8	Total Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-99							0	0	51	8.4	
100-149	2				1		3	2.9	164	20.7	
150-199	7		1		1	2	11	10.8	175	22.0	
200-249	10	2				4	16	15.7	185	23.3	
250-299	11	2	2	2	5	4	26	25.5	89	11.2	
300-349	3	2	1		2	1	9	8.8	61	7.7	
350-399	3				6	1	10	9.8	29	3.7	
400-449	5		3	1	3		12	11.8	12	1.5	
450-499	1	1	1		4	2	9	8.8	19	2.4	
500 & Over	1			1	2	2	6	5.9	9	1.1	
Total	43	7	8	4	24	16	102	100	794	100.0	
Mean	264.5	287.1	331.9	366.3	354.8	301.6					

Table 4.

Ejection Altitudes for Nonfatal Mishaps
(Combat 1966-1972 Versus Operational 1966-1970)

Altitude (Feet)	Combat Type Aircraft						Combat		Operational		
	A-4	A-6	A-7	RA-5C	F-4	F-8	Total Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-499	1				1	1	3	3	269	32.2	
500-999	2	1			1		4	4	64	7.7	
1,000-1,999	6	2			2	1	11	11	81	9.7	
2,000-2,999	5	1	3		3		12	12	64	7.7	
3,000-4,999	9			1	2	4	16	16	81	9.7	
5,000-9,999	14	2	2	3	12	7	40	40	166	19.9	
10,000-19,999	6	1	1		3	2	13	13	94	11.3	
20,000 & Over						1	1	1	16	1.9	
							Total	100	100	834	100.0

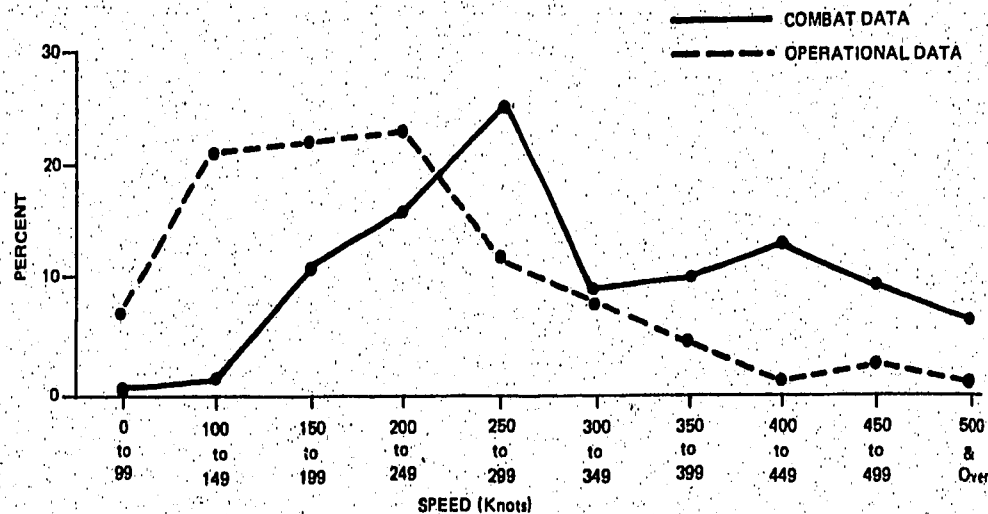


Figure 1. Combat versus operational ejection speeds.

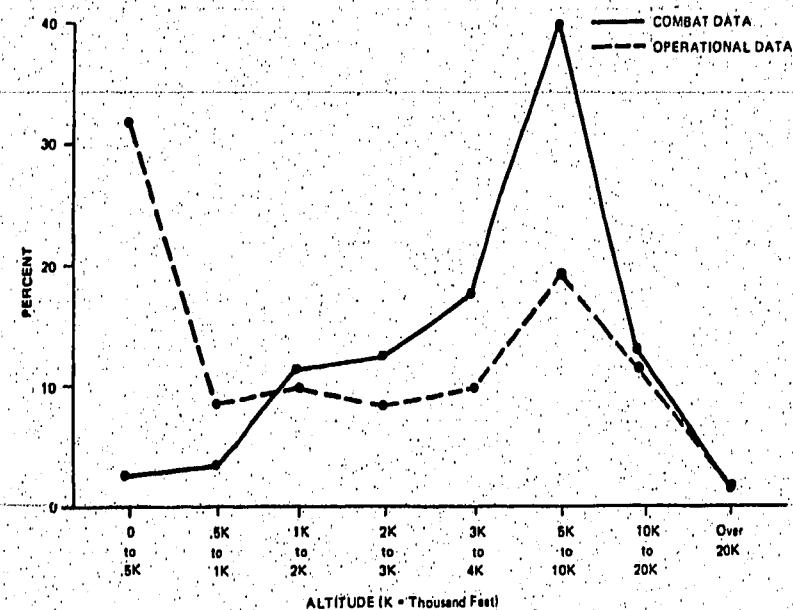


Figure 2. Combat versus operational ejection altitudes.

Table 5

Number and Degree of Ejection Injury
Sustained During Ejection Versus Speed at Time of Ejection

Ejection Speed Range	Total Number of Ejections at That Range	Major Injuries During Ejection	Minor Injuries During Ejection
0 - 99	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
100 - 149	3	2 (66%)	0 (0%)
150 - 199	11	0 (0%)	8 (73%)
200 - 249	16	0 (0%)	8 (38%)
250 - 299	26	5 (19%)	10 (39%)
300 - 349	9	2 (22%)	3 (33%)
350 - 399	10	2 (20%)	4 (40%)
400 - 449	12	4 (33%)	3 (25%)
450 - 499	9	3 (33%)	3 (33%)
500 and over	6	5 (83%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	2	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
Total	104	23	39

The following excerpts from narratives in this study describe the experiences of two aircrewmembers who were forced into high speed ejections:

400 KIAS Ejection: The initial forces were extremely violent as if I had hit a brick wall. I thought I would never stop tumbling. I could feel myself flailing in spite of my total disorientation. The opening chute shock was extremely violent and for a brief moment I did not know where I was. I finally figured out that my helmet had rotated 90° down (forward) and that I was looking inside my helmet at the pad that normally sits on top of one's head. My O₂ mask was jamming my neck in a choking manner but was still attached to my helmet. I had severe pain in my right hip and lower right back. My MK-3C flotation gear was hanging out of its covering.

550 KIAS Ejection: Ejection was via face curtain. Upon ejection, feeling was much like jumping out of a car, at speed, into a wall. Initial bewilderment and loss of vision were first reactions along with considerable pain on right side. First two minutes or so were spent hyperventilating in an attempt to regain vision. Vision finally returned. Glasses and visor were gone. (Chute opening was basically lost in reaction of blow of high speed ejection.) Right arm was noted, with relief, as still being present. Left glove was missing, right glove intact. Oxygen mask was checked only to find that all below mask (hoses, regulator, etc.) was missing. Mask was discarded. Survival radio in front pouch was missing, alternate, under left arm was present but couldn't be reached as couldn't seat pan handle (whole right arm had no sensation — just a large area-type pain). Left half of MK-3C was inflated. Water entry was gauged and no water was taken in. Other half of MK-3C inflated and chute released which snagged on left foot. Left knee dislocated as attempt was made to kick chute free.

Unfortunately not enough data were available to permit a statistical comparison between degree of injury for those pilots using the face curtain to initiate ejection versus those pilots using the seat-pan handle. High ejection speeds appeared to be a primary factor in many of the difficulties reported by the airmen during the ejection event (see Table 6).

A comparison of degree of leg flailing between those seats with leg restraints and those without leg restraints shows that of the 51 ejectees whose seats had leg restraints, 12 percent reported leg flailing; of the 53 without leg restraints, 13 percent reported leg flailing.

Table 6
Egress Difficulties

Egress Difficulty	Percent of Cases Reporting
Buffeting	11
G forces	8
Windblast	20
Difficulty locating canopy jettison mechanism	1
Hampered by clothing	2
Hampered by equipment (include body armor)	6
Hampered by injuries	8
Difficulty releasing canopy/hatch	3
Failure to release canopy/hatch	2
Difficulty locating/reaching normal ejection mechanism	7
Difficulty locating/reaching alternate ejection mechanism	2
Face curtain failed to activate seat	2
Face curtain problem (locating, reaching etc.)	2
Seat pan firing handle failed to activate seat	2
Canopy jettison problem	4
Canopy jettison failure (automatic means)	1
Could not open canopy/hatch	1
Difficulty releasing restraints	2
Confusion/panic/disorientation	6
Darkness—no visual reference	3
Fire/smoke/fuel	10
Anthropometric problem (size/build)	1
Personal equipment factor (other than hangup)	3
Upper extremities hit cockpit structures	3
Lower extremities hit cockpit structures	7
Man struck canopy/canopy bow	3
Falling — upper extremities	13
Falling — lower extremities	13

A surprising finding is that in many cases of relatively high speed ejection, glasses worn by crewmembers were retained, as shown in the following narratives:

400 KIAS

One interesting thing — I was wearing glasses during the entire sequence of events. With visor down there was no damage to glasses or eye and they stayed on my face.

450 KIAS

I sat up straight, head back, reached up and pulled the curtain — the seat separated and the chute popped open. I attempted to slip the chute out to sea but pulled the risers in the wrong direction — I also took my dark prescription glasses off, put them in my pocket...

250 KIAS

I lowered my visor — waved goodbye to pilot, assumed the NATOPS position and ejected. The sunglasses remained on (NAVY TYPE) and the Minolta SR7/W 135 mm lens was still around my neck. No problems. I meant to take the camera and sunglasses with me.

Almost 70 percent of all injuries occurred during the ejection-to-parachute-deployment phase of the escape event (see Table 7). These injuries ranged from slight sprains to severe neck and spinal fractures. Almost all the jettisoned-canopy spine and neck injuries were directly related to ejection forces or the direct effects of windblast. Virtually every imaginable aircraft attitude at the time of escape (see Table 8) was reported in this study.

Table 7
Injury Location Versus Time of Occurrence

	Pre-ejection	During Ejection	During Descent	After Descent	During Rescue	Unknown	Total	Percent
Head	3	19	3	4	1		30	15.2
Neck		17	2				19	9.6
Upper extremities	7	27	4		2	3	43	21.8
Spine		29	1	1			31	15.7
Torso	1	19	3	1	1	1	26	13.2
Lower extremities	5	21	3	6	1	2	38	19.3
Other		5	1	3	1		10	5.1
Total	16	137	17	15	6	6	197	
Percent	8.1	69.5	8.6	7.6	3.0	3.0		

An analysis of major spinal injuries was conducted comparing the two predominant ejection seats. In 51 ejections of A-4's and A-7's, equipped with the Douglas Escapac seat there were three major spinal injuries apparently due to seat ejection forces for a 5.9 percent injury rate. In 49 cases of F-4, F-8, and A-6 ejection using both the MK5 and MK7 Martin Baker seat, there were seven major spinal injuries for a 14.3 percent injury rate. There was not enough information for the RA-5C to permit a comparable evaluation of the North American HS-1 ejection seat.

Table 8
Aircraft Attitude at Time of Escape

Attitude	Number Times Reported
Nose up	30
Nose down	32
Right bank	11
Left bank	13
Disintegration	1
Straight and level	29
Inverted	6
Mushing	3
Rolling	13
Tumbling	2
Flat spin	1
Other	5

Six ejections from A-6's* through the canopy (primary sequence) resulted in a high degree of serious injury including fractures and severe lacerations imparted by the canopy. The ejection injury rate for this group was significantly higher than the jettisoned-canopy group.

The survivors' evaluation of the value of ejection seat indoctrination training was positive in almost all cases (see Table 9). The armed seat-on-tower which, while considered a definite help by the majority, was unpopular enough with a number of airmen for them to add additional negative comments concerning it in the narrative section. This may reflect apprehension associated with this particular device.

Table 9
Ejection Seat Training

	Training Definite Help	Training Possible Help	Training No Help	Training Role Unknown
Lectures and demonstrations	83%	16%	1%	0%
Unarmed ejection seat	81%	19%	0%	0%
Training films	76%	21%	1%	2%
Armed seat on tower	69%	18%	11%	2%

* This includes two reports received subsequent to the 104 cases analyzed for this report.

Descent and Landing

The descent and landing phases of the events studied proved to be relatively safe, especially when contrasted with the high number of injuries in the ejection phase. However, some of the emergencies and problems which did occur created potentially disastrous situations (see Table 10).

Table 10
Problems During Descent and Landing

Problem	Percent of Times Occured
Drogue slug swinging at man	3
Drogue slug struck man	4
Man struck by other equipment	4
Man struck by seat	3
Seat separation difficulty	3
Seat/parachute entanglement	2
Man tangled in chute risers -- major	5
Man tangled in chute risers -- minor	12
Man held on to seat	1
Tumbling/spinning	9
Parachute did not open properly	4
Parachute streamed partially	1

In approximately 20 percent of the cases considered, parachute opening shock was severe and resulted in severed suspension lines and missing or torn panels. The type parachutes utilized showed a high potential of producing oscillations. Over half the group experienced moderate or severe oscillations during descent, with approximately 25 percent reporting them during landing. Several of the airmen expressed a desire for a steerable parachute, or at least the Air Force's four-line jettisoning system.

The landing phase again shows a relatively low number of both major and minor injuries. This is in marked contrast to Air Force data (Shannon, 1969) which offers the following comparative injury rates: 40 percent -- parachute landings, 40 percent -- ejection force. These discrepancies must be attributed, in large degree, to the different types of landing terrain associated with the two groups. Table 11 shows Navy ejections are principally over water, while Air Force ejections are usually over land.

Table 12 gives the various types of terrain encountered by the Navy airmen. On land, the predominant injuries included leg fractures and sprains from improper landing, and lacerations from descent through trees and heavy brush. Injury among this group had a secondary critical aspect: it tended to restrict escape and evasion. Serious injury also produced

a greater hazard to the rescue crew because it increased the time required at the rescue site. Dragging by parachute was rarely reported and was not responsible for any injuries.

Table 11
Parachute Landing Terrain

	Land	Water
Air Force (128 cases) (Till & Shannon, 1970)	77%	23%
Navy (104 cases)	27%	73%

Table 12
Type Terrain at Landing Site

Type of Terrain	Number of Times Encountered
Open sea	75
River	1
Deep water	8
Shallow water	8
Marsh/swamp/mud	2
Hard ground	11
Soft ground	6
Dense woods	11
In trees	8
Through trees	9
Ravine/steep slopes	7
Rocks	2
Other	2

Water landings produced far fewer injuries on impact. However, shroudline and parachute entanglement produced some hazardous situations which very nearly resulted in fatalities. Survivors' answers to the questionnaire and their accompanying narratives indicate that there was a great deal of uncertainty as to what flotation equipment should be deployed before water landing (Table 13).

Table 13
Equipment Deployed Before Water Landings

	Yes	No	Unknown
Survival kit	65%	34%	1%
Life raft	57%	42%	1%
Life vest	49%	50%	1%

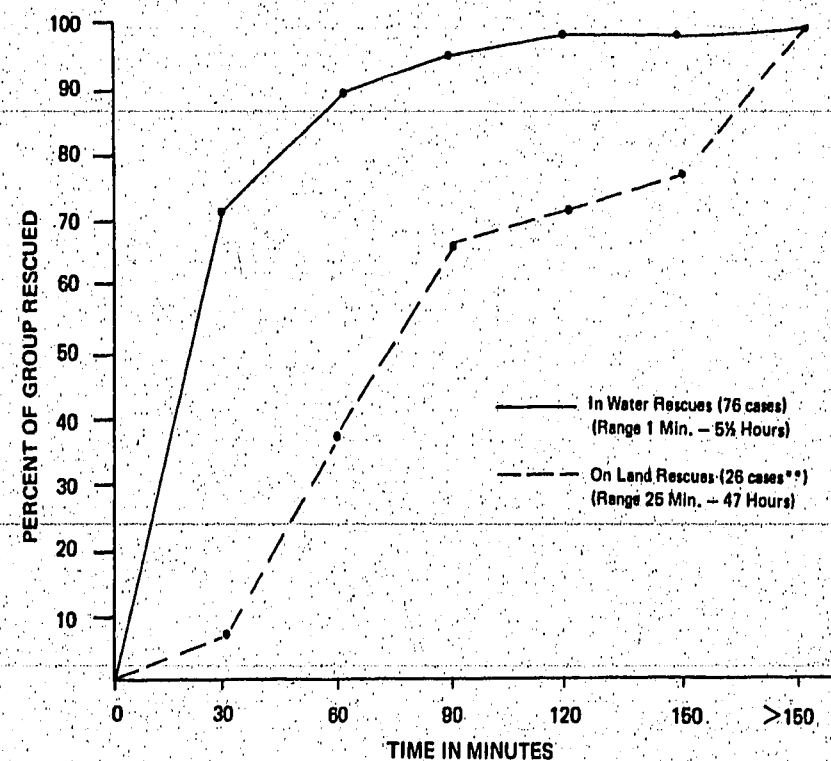
Survival

Of the 104 cases analyzed, 66 percent landed in hostile territory. The other 34 percent landed far enough at sea to feel they were in relatively friendly territory. The survival scenario of the individuals varied to such a degree that it is virtually impossible to categorize them by any other means than common problems encountered.

Land. The 28 individuals who came down over land faced survival problems somewhat in proportion to the degree of injuries sustained. This situation was compounded by the rugged landscape and dense jungles of Southeast Asia. While heavy vegetation provided some measure of support in terms of hiding from the enemy, the narratives indicate that this vegetation ultimately proved more of a hindrance because of the problems it created during the rescue phase. The subtropical climate eliminated exposure problems. There were several cases of strong thirst; however, neither hunger nor dehydration was reported as a detrimental factor in survival. Parachute entanglement in the trees created one very serious situation and a number of minor problems. Entanglement problems led to the recommendation that rappelling equipment and some training in its use be made available.

Perhaps the greatest problem in the land survival scenario was the inability to establish contact with rescue and survival forces through the dense jungle canopy. The jungle canopy interfered with radio wave propagation and smoke signals. In some cases, the overgrowth was so thick that individuals were unable to penetrate it with either smoke from the Mark-13 flare or the Mark-79 kit.

Water. In the ejection section of this report, it was pointed out that one of the primary reasons for ejection initiation delay was to reach open water. While the merits of this delay, due to the hazards of in-water parachute entanglement, are subject to some controversy, the evidence in this study supports the over-water ejection in terms of the time to effect rescue (see Figure 3). This theory is further supported by a comparison of time-to-recovery statistics between the predominantly land-rescued Air Force survivors and the predominantly water rescued Navy group (Table 14).



**Excludes two escaped POW's who were part of this study group.

Figure 3. Comparison of times to effect land rescues versus times to effect water rescues.

Table 14
Times to Recovery

	Navy 73% Water 27% Land	Air Force 23% Water 77% Land
0 - 30 Min	55% Recovered	36% Recovered
0 - 60 Min	77% Recovered	64% Recovered

*Till & Shannon, 1970

Aside from the "friendly territory" aspects of over-water ejection, there were fewer injuries from the landings themselves. On the negative side, the "feet wet" at all costs attitude undoubtedly led to situations where ejection was unsuccessful due to the aircraft being out of the safe ejection envelope or disintegrating during the ejection process.

The most serious drawback to over-water ejection is the possibility of parachute entanglement in the water.

On the way down I prepared everything for a water landing, except inflation of my MK-3C vest. I would estimate I was approximately 1500' above the water when I passed out from fear, pain, or shock (or all three). I woke up in the water with the parachute shroudlines tangled around me. I had to take off my leather gloves in order to release the parachute Koch fittings -- which I did. In the meantime I was sinking to a depth of about 10 feet. It was difficult to fight back to the surface without the use of my right leg, which was useless. I got a breath of air and sank again before I could inflate my vest. When I came up the second time and floating I was horribly entangled in the shroudlines. The weight of the parachute was holding me down to about chest level. As I relaxed to assess the situation, I got out my life raft. When I tried to inflate the raft, the toggle broke when I pulled it. I gave the raft up at that point. I then took out my shroud cutting knife and began to systematically cut the shroudlines one at a time. This evolution took about 15 minutes.

Approximately one quarter of the airmen who landed in the water reported some degree of parachute entanglement and six reported being pulled down by the sinking parachute. Three other cases reported entanglement with equipment other than parachute equipment. While there are no statistics as to the number of airmen who were not successful in unangling themselves, the severity of several of the survivors' entanglement situations indicated that quick assistance was primarily responsible for their being recovered. Many entanglements were made more perilous by injuries, panic, shock, and poor physical conditioning. Some airmen reported complete physical exhaustion after a matter of seconds in the entanglement situation. In many cases, the distinct impression was left that any further struggling to extricate themselves would have been impossible.

Many of the airmen queried had a very positive approach to survival and largely attributed their success to being well prepared mentally for such an emergency. Much of this positive

attitude, they felt, was gained by confidence in their formal and informal training. Table 15 shows the importance placed by survivors on water survival training. It should be noted that the results of this table can be slightly misleading in that an answer in the *No Help* category is not necessarily a negative answer. In some cases, rescues were effected so quickly that airmen had no time to use the skills acquired in a specific course and consequently checked it as *No Help*.

Table 15
Degree of Help Attributed to Water Survival Training
by Those Airmen Ejecting Over Water (76 Cases)

Course	Definite Help	Possible Help	No Help	Unknown
Maintenance swim	54%	28%	17%	1%
Survival, general	35%	24%	29%	13%
Parachute drag	59%	18%	21%	2%
*DWEST	57%	14%	27%	3%

*Deep Water Environmental Survival Training

In the narrative sections, there were a number of comments requesting additional training involving actual parachute entanglement in the water under both daylight dark conditions. The land survival training received slightly higher marks. This may have been due in part to airmen having more time to use the skills taught by land survival schools before rescue (see Table 16).

Table 16
Degree of Help Attributed to Land Survival Training
by Those Airmen Ejecting Over Land (26 Cases)

Course	Definite Help	Possible Help	No Help	Unknown
Jungle survival	55%	32%	14%	0%
Survival, general	53%	32%	11%	5%

Table 17
Problems Encountered During Survival

Table 18
Survival and Rescue Equipment Problems Reported in this Study

Rescue

Over ninety percent of the recoveries examined were performed by helicopters during daylight hours (see Table 19). The data indicate that night rescues and rescues by vehicles other than helicopters were no less effective than were daylight rescues performed by helicopters. One of the primary difficulties in the recovery phase was the rescuee's lack of familiarity with the equipment used to transport him to the rescue craft. Table 20 lists rescue equipment items and the number of times they were reportedly used. Note the wide variety of equipment involved. Figure 4 shows the two helicopters most frequently used in recovery operations.

[illegible]

Table 19
Rescue Circumstances*

Number of Survivors Rescued by:	
Helicopter	92
Destroyer	5
Sea Plane	5
Other	2
Number of Survivors Rescued During:	
Day	95
Night	9

* Personnel left rescue craft to assist survivor 42% of the time.

Table 20
Rescue Equipment and Use

Rescue Devices	Number Times Reported Used
Sling (horse collar)	44
Forest penetrator (Billy Pugh)	18
Seat (three-pronged)	8
Boarding ladder	5
Life ring	4
Rope	3
Stretcher	2
Basket	1
Grapnel	1

In some cases, airmen were not familiar with rescue equipment due to some modification which, under conditions of extreme stress, produced confusion out of proportion to a similar situation involving an operational rescue. In other cases, downed airmen could not properly use the rescue devices lowered to them because of injuries. In these cases, aeromedical evacuation personnel had to be lowered to assist, and recovery times were accordingly lengthened. Such operations greatly increased the vulnerability of the entire rescue team as well as that of the rescuee. Problems associated with lack of familiarity with rescue devices were indicated less frequently in later reports, as rescue devices became more standardized and airmen were better indoctrinated in their use. Perhaps the most frustrating rescue episode involved a helicopter hovering over an airman only to find the rescue seat would not reach down through the trees because the amount of cable on the winch was insufficient. Both land and water recoveries were complicated by helicopter downwash. The effects were more serious in water rescues since downwash caused increased parachute entanglement.

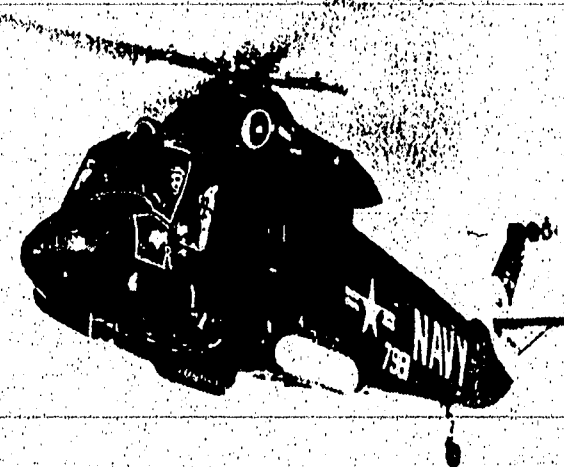


Figure 4. Helicopters used for emergency aeromedical evacuation.
Top: The UH-2 Seasprite; Below: The SH-3A Sea King

The radio was the primary piece of rescue signaling equipment used. In those cases where the radio was damaged or thought to be inoperative, rescue times were increased and rescues were sometimes severely complicated. A great variety of visual signaling equipment was used in support of radios or in place of them. Table 21 shows the effectiveness of signaling equipment as reported by the survivors. Many recoveries were effected without the use of any signaling equipment because of a wingman or the rescue vessel was in sight of the downed airman throughout the entire event.

Table 21
Effectiveness of Equipment Used to Signal Rescue Forces

	Number of Times Successfully Utilized	Number of Times Equipment Worked Poorly	Unknown
Radios (type unknown)	19	7	4
RT-10		2	1
AN/PRC-63	10	1	
AN/PRC-49	3	3	
AN/PRC-90	9	1	1
Beeper in RSSK	3		
MK-13 flare	18	1	2
Pencil flare	5	1	
.38 Cal. tracers	2	2	
Strobe light	6		
Mirror	2		1
Dye marker	2		1
Whistle			
Wingman contacted	9		
Rescue vessel had in sight at time of ejection	17		

Some signaling equipment, especially flares, presented problems because the survivor was unfamiliar with the method of actuation:

As I penetrated the trees, the antenna broke off my radio rendering it unusable. Once on the ground, I removed my MK-3C and put its flares in my pocket. One of these ultimately allowed the Helo to see me. When I heard the Helo approach, I hoped my radio would work at short range - it didn't. So I attempted to initiate the day portion of a day-night flare. The Helo was coming at me. Though I'd seen movies on how to initiate one - I'd never done it and I experienced problems getting it started. When I finally did, the Helo was pointed away from me. One of the SAR aircraft spotted the flare and vectored the Helo back toward me:

Questionnaire responses often indicated that once the survivor felt he had been located by the rescue vehicle, he ceased signaling. This deprived rescue vehicles of valuable support. Igniting the day end of the MK-13 flare, for example, can aid recovery operations by indicating wind direction.

Table 22 lists problems which complicated rescue operations. Many of these problems were similar to those found in operational rescues. However, they became more serious in combat when rescue operations came under enemy fire or the threat of fire and speed of operations was essential. These conditions sometimes resulted in injury and in the compounding of existing injuries.

Table 22
Problems Which Complicated Rescue Operations

Problem	Number of Times Reported
Topography (rough seas, mountains, etc.)	12
Communication problems	11
Problem boarding rescue vehicle	9
Physical limitation of person being rescued	8
Failure of rescue equipment	8
Darkness	8
Hampered by helicopter downwash	8
Inadequacy/lack of rescue vehicle	6
Drag/entanglement by deployed parachute	6
Weather	4
Rescue/crewman assist hesitancy	3
Panic/inappropriate action of person being rescued	3
Weight/drag problem not due to parachute	3
Inadequacy of rescue personnel	2
Vehicle operator factor (poor procedure)	2
Hampered by personal survival equipment	2
Failure of rescue vehicle	1
Fire/explosion	1
Inadequacy/lack of rescue equipment	1
Physical limitations of rescue personnel	1

At the time of many of the rescues studied, there was no clear cut policy as to whether the helicopter rescue crewman should enter the water to assist the survivor. In some instances, when the rescue crewman did go into the water to assist, confusion resulted and further complicated the rescue. Often, this was because the survivor did not know what was expected of him or of the helicopter crewman. This situation was further complicated when the helicopter remained in the area causing downwash and noise which decreased visibility and

communications between the men in the water. Some aircrewmembers reported that helicopter rescuemen would have been of more assistance had they been better equipped and better briefed on how the aircrewman's flight equipment worked.

Personnel involved in rescues were not always professionally trained to deal with medical problems during rescue. The following excerpt attests to this.

The pain was severe, so I asked the sailor holding my head to break out the morphine syrettes I carried in my left sleeve pocket. He said he had never given morphine so I mumbled step by step instructions. I told him to unscrew the plastic cap and throw it away, push the wire plunger all the way into the syrette, then pull it out and throw it away. The sailor was obviously shook because he pulled out the plunger and threw the syrette over the side. We went through the whole thing again with the second syrette, this time successfully, and the sailor got the morphine into my arm.

Rescue craft frequently faced enemy opposition. Forty-five of the rescues in this report were exposed to opposition from small arms, 37 mm mortars, surface-to-air missiles, and anti-aircraft fire. This hostile fire was generally most intense on the in-country pickups. In the early phases of the Southeast Asia conflict, water rescues often became "races" between helicopters and small enemy vessels.

Injuries

The classification of injuries into categories of major, minor, or none is highly subjective, even within the Navy, and somewhat imprecise because of the number of borderline cases which can fit into either category. This is especially true in this study because not all of the medical data surrounding the injury is available. In order to compare the degree of injury here with Navy operational and Air Force combat ejection data, a categorization was attempted using the information supplied by respondents in the injury data portion of the questionnaire together with information from the descriptive narratives. The information was then coded according to the instructions under "Injury Classification" of OPNAVINST 3750.6G. The results by aircraft type are shown along with the Naval Safety Center operational ejection data and Air Force combat ejection data (Till & Shannon, 1970) in Table 23. From this table, even allowing for a certain degree of error in coding, it appears that the number of major injuries in the study group was significantly higher than that found in operational mishaps and in the Air Force ejections.

Table 23
Injury Classified by Aircraft Type
(104 Cases)

	Major	Minor	None
A-4	10	19	14
A-6	4	2	2
A-7	3	4	1
F-4	7	11	7
F-8	5	8	3
RA-5C	1	1	2
Total	30	45	29
Combat % (104 cases)	29%	43%	28%
Operational ejections %* (972 cases)	19%	44%	37%
Air Force combat ejections % (282 cases)	13%	57%	31%

*Till and Shannon, 1970.

Table 24, shows the wide variety of type of injuries found among the 104 respondents.

Table 24
Type of Injury Reported in 104 Cases*

Injury	Number of Times Reported	Injury	Number of Times Reported
Contusions	40	Muscle tear	5
Strains	25	Open wounds	4
Lacerations (severe)	24	Abrasions	2
Small cuts	24	Acoustic trauma	1
Fractures (simple and compound)	22	Amputation of limb	1
General overall pain	13	Concussion	1
Burns (1st, 2nd, and 3rd degree)	10	Hematoma	1
Sprains (major)	10	Dislocation	1
Spinal compression	8	Disease (malaria)	1

*As reported in questionnaire

It can be seen that a large number of severe lacerations and open wounds were encountered. In these cases, bleeding during the rescue process was frequently severe and required immediate medical attention. Many of the aircrewmembers in the group suffered either a compression spinal fracture, a severe spinal strain, or a fracture of an extremity, which necessitated careful handling during recovery to avoid seriously aggravating the injury.

The nature of the injuries and the predominance of certain types has implications both for the type of rescue technique employed and the type of medical support equipment which should be carried in the rescue vehicle. These implications will be elaborated in the following section.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ejection

Since early 1964, and the beginning of heavy U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia, two important steps have been taken in the chronology of ejection seat development:

- 1964 to 1966 — Introduction of new aircraft with low-level ejection capability (A-6 and A-7);
- 1967 to 1971 — Introduction of the Martin-Baker rocket seat and DART (Directional Automatic Realignment Trajectory) system.

The introduction of this rocket seat dramatically decreased the number of severe spinal injuries that were so prevalent in early combat ejections involving the F-4's and F-8's using the older Martin-Baker MK-5 seat. This decrease in injury is directly attributable to the reduction of G forces associated with the new seat. Whereas the older MK-5 seats imparted ejection forces in the 15 to 18 G range, the new rocket seat imparts peak forces of around 12 to 13 G's.

While one major injury problem (severe spinal fracture) has largely been solved by the new seat, the ejection phase is still responsible for the greatest number of injuries. There are still some injuries resulting from the direct forces of the ejection seat, apparently related to poor body positioning. During combat ejections, the flailing problem is compounded by the fact that the mean ejection speed is almost 100 miles per hour faster than the mean speed for operational ejection and by the large increase in the number of combat ejections over 400 knots. These higher speeds account for windblast and flailing being the number one and number two reported difficulties during the egress phase.

The experiences of the group studied did not support the theory that leg restraints control lower extremity flailing. The results showed that there was virtually *no difference* in the percent reporting lower extremity flailing between the group using seats with leg restraints and those using seats without leg restraints. This is perhaps an indication that leg restraints are not as effective at the higher airspeeds characteristic of combat ejections. This point should be given consideration in the development of any new type of restraints or in any decision to do away with leg restraints because of their annoyance factor on regular flight operations and their hinderance effect during escape from a ditched aircraft. As it is anticipated that all new fighter and attack type aircraft are being designed around increased speed, it is perhaps time to evaluate some entirely new restraint systems which would minimize high speed flailing.

The primary ejection sequence is completed through the canopy in very few aircraft (see Table 25). The A-6, as the table indicates, is one of these. Five of the six A-6 ejections studied resulted in three major injuries and two minor injuries. This ejection injury rate is so significantly above the jettisoned-canopy rate that intensive investigations are warranted on this method of egress before it is incorporated in any future aircraft escape systems.

Table 25
Aircraft Canopy Ejection Capabilities

Primary Ejection Sequence Not Through Canopy	Primary Ejection Sequence Through Canopy	Primary Ejection Not Through Canopy Secondary Method Through Canopy
A-4	A-6	A-7
TA-4	TF-8J	
F-4	OV-10	
F-8*		
F-14		
T-2		
RA-5C**		

* Handle on left side of head box allows for thru canopy ejection designed for underwater escape.

** If canopy fails to jettison, the seat can force it out of the way.

There were too many variables associated with method of ejection seat initiation versus the degree of injury incurred on ejection to permit drawing of conclusions with statistical significance. There were, however, some results which support taking extra effort to use the primary face curtain over the seat-pan handle to initiate ejection. When the seat-pan handle was used, a 36 percent major injury rate was incurred during the ejection phase. When the face curtain method was used, major injury resulted only 18.2 percent of the time, probably because positioning is much better using the face curtain system. The importance of correct body positioning should, therefore, be stressed during the aircrewman's training.

Increased speed at the time of ejection appears to be a primary cause of initial injury and a factor which severely compounds pre-ejection injuries. Consequently, increased emphasis during training should be placed on the absolute necessity to slow the aircraft to at least 400 miles per hour prior to ejection. If at all possible, this speed should be sacrificed in conjunction with getting back to "friendly territory." Ejection should not, however, be delayed past the critical point to achieve this goal. The SAR forces, especially in the later

stages of the conflict, have shown remarkable success in recovering airmen who ejected within seconds of being struck.

Under combat conditions, it is recognized that it is difficult to optimize one pre-ejection variable, much less all of them. The following narrative, from this study, is included to illustrate that "everything doesn't have to go right" to insure success.

I ejected when plane's left wing was approximately 45°, left wing down, nose about level, and approximately 150' altitude. I hit the water just after seat separation but before my chute blossomed. I'm pretty sure that I injured my arm on exiting the cockpit but all other injuries were upon water impact.

In the water I had some trouble inflating the LPA-1 life preserver. My flare and shark repellents/sea dye packets were located just below the inflation toggles and these and the parachute shroud lines running across my chest made it very difficult to locate the toggles. I finally inflated the left side and that brought me to the surface long enough to get a breath of air. My shroud lines and seat survival kit pulled me under again so I dropped my seat survival kit to stop my descent, unhooked my right Koch fitting and then was able to get the right side of the LPA inflated. From then on I had no trouble staying afloat. I was only in the water 4-5 minutes before the life boat from the plane guard destroyer picked me up.

Ejection training was considered necessary, both in terms of minimizing injuries and of giving confidence in the system. This confidence in the system appeared to ultimately be the most important factor in the pilots' decision not to delay ejection past the critical point.

The following is a list of some of the recommendations which airmen offered for the ejection sequence:

1. Make sure all equipment, such as oxygen hoses, are properly routed before ejection.
2. There should be more training on what the results of high speed ejection can be.
3. Double check to insure correct body position and keep teeth firmly clenched during the ejection.
4. Aircraft with two or more ejection seats should have different color parachutes assigned to each seat. In the event of only one crewman escaping, another aircraft can accurately report as to which one escaped.

Descent and Landing

Parachute opening shock was reported as severe in 20 percent of the cases. However, it was responsible for only minor injuries, most of which were no more severe than strains and bruises. Indirectly, it was responsible for some additional injuries on landing because of its destructive effect on the parachute itself. Several problems during descent resulted in potentially hazardous situations and occurred often enough to warrant further study (see Table 10).

The landing injury rate for the study group was relatively low, due primarily to the large number of water landings. Those who did come down on land suffered the same type and degree of injuries generally found in the operational ejections. The main difference, of course, was that in combat these injuries limited the survivor's ability to escape and evade, decreasing his chance for rescue. An injured man also greatly increases hazards for the search and rescue vehicle and crew.

Rescue accounts from Southeast Asia have shown that, in many cases, seconds have made the difference between a successful and unsuccessful rescue. This point, perhaps more than any other, illustrates the importance of collecting all of the facts related to the problems associated with combat ejection and survival. Every improvement that can be made which decreases the likelihood of even minor injuries, can directly result in a decrease in the overall time for recovery and a consequential decrease in the exposure of both the survivor and SAR crew.

Some recommendations and cautions offered by the group studied dealing with the rescue phase of the event were as follows:

1. A rappelling system should be developed which will be available to pilots who may be operating in areas with high trees. Many squadrons, now have aircrewmembers pack 150 feet of parachute shroudline in the flight suit for use as a lowering line in case of landing in jungle trees.
2. Because most coastal breezes are on-shore breezes, ejection should be initiated far enough to sea to prevent the ejectee from being carried back into hostile territory.

On the basis of time-to-recovery statistics, it is obviously preferable to eject over water. If the survivor ejected well off-shore, he was relatively safe in terms of capture, further injury from hostile fire, and impact injury from landing. The water itself, however, presents a new hazard, chute entanglement.

If and when to deploy flotation gear is another problem interrelated with entanglement. There still appears to be some confusion about the conditions under which flotation gear

should be inflated prior to water entry. The confusion could be largely eliminated by additional stress on this point during aerospace physiology ejection or water survival training.

Survival

Water Survival. When flotation gear was inflated properly, the water survival stage of the mishap was generally the most uneventful of the entire sequence. Even the badly wounded were able to use the time in the water for self-medication, and the physically exhausted could rest. Recovery from the water was extremely fast, with 90 percent being recovered in the first hour and 99 percent being recovered by the end of the second hour. Most of the survivors were far enough off-shore that enemy fire served as nothing more than a nuisance factor during the survival period.

Some specific problems and recommendations which were mentioned by the group relating to this phase included:

1. Continuing problems were reported with parachute release devices; these led to entanglement difficulties. While the Koch release fittings represent an improvement over Rocket Jet fittings, the problem has not been eliminated.
2. The old-type shroud cutter was difficult to use.
3. There were a significant number of problems with life rafts. The activation mechanism was difficult to operate and the rafts sometimes became punctured during boarding. It appeared to the survivors that additional raft training under various sea state and lighting conditions would be of some merit.
4. Several airmen reported difficulty in actuating life vests. Lack of familiarity with the equipment, as well as interference from other equipment appear as major causes. Longer, more accessible inflation lanyards might help somewhat and some additional thought should be given to automatic activation mechanisms for life vests for pilots who may be wounded under combat conditions.
5. Sharks were reported in three cases. Whenever there are operations over shark-infested waters, special training sessions should be set up to review procedures to lessen the probability of shark attack. One survivor felt he was in shark-infested waters and used his G-suit to get him higher out of the water exposing less to an under-water attack.

I feel strongly that I was spared from shark bite and probable death by keeping legs floating directly on top of water via inflated "G" suit. Numerous sharks all around me due to blood from pilot who had been in area for approximately 40 minutes without a raft. "G" suit was used as last resort float, floated like a log for about 20 minutes with sharks all around.

Land Survival. Except for the two escaped prisoners of war, land survival for this group was restricted to a maximum period of 47 hours. Consequently, survival *per se* really involved escape and evasion techniques. The equipment used during these periods will be discussed in the next section.

Survival Equipment. The quick recovery times found in this study support the change from the seven-day SEEK-2 kits to the shorter duration SRU-31/P kit. Items which were reportedly used to any degree included: first aid equipment, insect repellent and mosquito netting. Several cases of intense thirst were reported; however, the water from the water bottles was sufficient in all cases. It is anticipated that evaluation of this equipment will not be as positive when similar data are obtained from the returned prisoners of war, some of whom had to survive for several days before being captured.

One group who found long-term survival techniques necessary were POW's who escaped from captivity. One reported:

I lived off the land during 3½ days of evasion on berries, figs, bamboo, sugar cane, squash, and corn stalks. Bothered considerably by leeches. Terrain was rugged with Karst, dense undergrowth with brambles, and high dense grass.

Several respondents reported not being able to find certain pieces of equipment, especially at night or under low-visibility conditions. This problem can be mitigated by training as to the location and actuation of equipment by touch only. Many men, after a survival experience involving low visibility, stressed the importance of knowing where to find and how to use all of the survival equipment.

Other survival equipment suggestions from this group include:

1. Make an emergency first-aid kit readily available in the cockpit. Especially a one-hand operated tourniquet.
2. Make sure all equipment is well secured prior to take-off. This will reduce the potential for being struck by various pieces of survival gear during ejection and reduce equipment losses.
3. Give more option as to the type and amount of survival gear worn. This is especially important when operating in a combat theater with various types of terrain.
4. Supply a compact jungle hat with mosquito netting attached in the survival kit.

Signalling Equipment. The development of new survival radios from 1966 to the present was one of the most important changes in all the survival equipment. However, it was not

possible to use radios while the user wore a helmet. A solution was a modification of the AN/PRC-90 earphone cord that permitted radio use with a helmet-mounted headset. This modification permits the AN/PRC-90 to be used during a helicopter pickup of a downed airman or, if an aircraft radio has failed, when the pilot desires airborne communication.

A problem universal to all radios is the decreased range capability with heavy jungle cover. This problem is currently being looked at by both the Air Force and the Navy. Both agencies are investigating the feasibility of devices which place an antenna above the jungle canopy. Equipment which will fulfill this requirement should be available by 1975 (Hughes & Schubert, 1970).

Some of the survivors' recommendations involving radios include:

1. Some thought should be given to making an official allowance of two, two-channel radios during combat operations.
2. The user should not stop transmitting just because he is not receiving. In several cases it was found that, while the receiver was not working, the transmitter was.
3. Radios should be used sparingly in order to conserve batteries.

While radios provided the primary means of initial contact with the SAR vehicles, their use was, in most cases, accompanied by some additional visual signaling device. In other instances where the radio was lost or damaged, other signaling equipment was solely responsible for successful rescue. The most commonly used visual rescue devices were the MK-13, Mod O Day/Night flare and the MK-79 Mod O Illuminating kit.

The MK-13 Mod O flare, for the most part, was highly reliable. It was, however, difficult to use by one who was injured. The survivors with upper extremity injuries universally expressed a desire for a flare that could be readily operated with one hand. Several reports indicated that smoke from this flare did not penetrate heavy jungle foliage. Some recommendations from the survivors concerning this piece of equipment are as follows:

1. Flares should be inspected periodically for rust. Rings have broken off because of rust, making the flares useless.
2. One should periodically activate different types of flares to remain familiar with their use.
3. On all helicopter rescues, one should make maximum use of flares to aid the SAR vehicle pilot concerning wind direction and speed.

The MK-80 signal cartridge from the MK-79 Mod O Illumination kit proved to be much more effective as a locator device than the .38 Cal. tracer; however, the MK 80 flare in this kit did not have sufficient power to penetrate heavy jungle cover. This problem could be alleviated by the use of two new aerial signals, the MK-113 and the MK-114. The MK-113 should give greater penetration due to its being propelled by the momentum from a .38 Cal. pistol. The MK-114, which consists of a rocket assist signal fired out of a launcher, should also give greater jungle penetration. Its red smoke display will begin at about 25 feet above ground level and will extend to at least 500 feet (*Approach*, July 1971).

Two other problems associated with the MK-79 flare gun were found in a previous study (Parker & Bonner, 1969). The gun required too long a time for reloading. Survivors reported that after firing the first round, the recovery aircraft would turn toward them. However, in many instances, they would be overflown before another round could be loaded and fired. Additionally, helicopter crewmen reported that they could not tell where the pen gun flare originated upon locating it above the jungle canopy.

Those cases in the present study in which some difficulty was reported in using the MK-79 kit were attributed, for the most part, to lack of familiarity with the item and the stresses inherent in survival situations. Again, it would be advisable to periodically practice loading and firing the device. One pilot reported that the MK-79 kit was too noisy in combat situations. A quietly-activated rocket-type flare should be given consideration in any future system developed.

Other signaling equipment used included the strobe light, mirror, dye marker, and whistle. All of this equipment worked satisfactorily.

The need for much of this signaling equipment was negated by the fact that, in this conflict, the friendly forces maintained total air superiority even over hostile areas. Thus, the damaged aircraft was often able to limp back in sight of a rescue vehicle. Often, a wingman could remain in the area of the downed airman, and direct the SAR forces to his exact location. These conditions may not be true in all future conflicts. Future signaling equipment should not be designed with any reliance on this type of help.

Rescue

The rescue narrative sections of the questionnaires testified to the fact that many rescues were made possible by the heroic efforts of the search and rescue forces. One of the primary aims of this study was to bring to light those problem areas both in equipment and procedures which, during rescue operation, jeopardize the SAR crews and the men being rescued.

The injury rate during the rescue phase was relatively low. However, many existing injuries were compounded either directly because of improper equipment or indirectly because of the delays in effecting the recovery due to either inadequate or unavailable equipment. The results section of this report showed that a wide variety of equipment was used to get men aboard a rescue vehicle. In many cases, a better apparatus could have been used had it been available. Jungle penetrators, for example, are far better devices for helicopter pickup through dense foliage than the rescue slings used when penetrators were not available. Many other problems reported in this study could have been avoided simply by better planning. Examples of these were insufficient cable on a winch to reach down through trees to effect a recovery, and the lack of backup equipment aboard a helicopter for use when a primary system was lost.

With the various branches of the military services working in close proximity as they did in Southeast Asia, the need for standardization of rescue equipment became evident. Lack of familiarity with specific rescue devices caused various degrees of confusion which resulted in some substantial increases in recovery times. In several cases, the rescue device was not used as intended and the rescuee was recovered holding on to the device in any way he could. Clearly, there is a need to standardize rescue devices, rescue tools, communications equipment, and training. In a recent attempt toward improvement of this situation, AIRPAC now requires standard helicopter rescue procedures and equipment within AIRPAC operating areas (COMNAVAIRPAC MESSAGE 28 April 1971).

Many of the problems associated with the rescue equipment encountered by the study sample population, resulted from its not being adequate for combat conditions. An example of this is the low-speed recovery hoist. This device also has a high incidence of jamming, probably because increased stresses are placed on the winch during fast getaways while the man is still being recovered. While this hoist is evidently completely adequate under operational conditions where time is not critical, it is highly unsuitable for combat work.

For the most part, the "swimmer in the water" procedure has proved an effective technique. When a swimmer is present to assist, the survivor in an "alien" environment who may be injured and in shock need not perform all pre-hoist procedures. The swimmer, who is ideally trained for his task and for whom the sea environment is not alien, can do all this for him. While in the vast majority of cases studied the swimmer was of great assistance to the rescue, this was not always true. In some cases the swimmer was not properly trained or equipped to cope with the situation; in others, his presence confused the rescuee and complicated the rescue.

This study provided no conclusive data upon which to base recommendations concerning the conditions under which helicopter rescue crewmen can be of most assistance in the swimmer role. Neither did it yield definitive data concerning optimum rescue equipment.

However, two requirements clearly emerged. (1) The procedures to be used by the swimmer and by the rescuer, respectively, must be clearly defined and promulgated. Further study will undoubtedly be needed to establish procedural guidelines. Ideally, the study should be conducted in the open sea with the complicating factor of helicopter downwash. (2) Additional research is needed concerning the degree to which helicopter downwash complicates rescue and contributes to the parachute entanglement problem.

In this study, some narratives described rescue problems caused by inadequate rescue crewman knowledge or training. In the future, under the CV concept now being introduced, this problem could become more severe. Under the CV system a single aircraft carrier will carry both attack and ASW forces. The HS helicopters used for ASW work are likely, under these circumstances, to be pressed into occasional SAR work. The aircrewman carried on this vehicle will be trained primarily in ASW sensor operations and will have, at best, three weeks of swim training at HC-5 plus whatever squadron training time is allocated to SAR matters. He will, therefore, be less proficient for SAR operations than presently designated SAR aircrewmen.

In both land and water recoveries in this study, communication was a major problem. The intense noise during recovery is a problem even when all communications equipment is available and working. It may ultimately prove that the best and most reliable system involves increased training for both fixed-wing and helicopter crews in hand signals applicable to rescue and recovery situations.

The variety and large number of very serious injuries reported in this study testify to the need for a relatively complete medical support equipment kit aboard every rescue vehicle. This kit should contain the necessary devices to supply adequate emergency treatment to the types of injuries listed in Table 24.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to collect and evaluate information concerning the recovery of Navy aircrewmen downed during air combat operations in Southeast Asia. The population of interest was restricted to Navy personnel flying fixed-wing aircraft who were downed as a direct result of enemy action. Data were collected through use of a questionnaire form, similar in content to that maintained by the Naval Safety Center for non-combat accidents. One hundred and four responses were received.

Combat Recoveries

The combat event was found to be different in several dimensions from an emergency aircraft escape and rescue under normal training and non-combat conditions. For one thing, the average airspeed at the time of ejection in combat is about 100 knots faster than for non-combat events. Also, as one would expect, there is evidence that the rate of major injury for combat escapes is higher. Finally, the circumstances under which the rescue is conducted are frequently quite different from those of a state-side rescue. The presence of hostile forces requires excellent signaling and communication systems and means that the entire recovery process must be accomplished almost in a matter of seconds.

The presence of an SAR network in Southeast Asia resulted, for the most part, in rapid recoveries. For airmen ejecting over water, 90 percent were rescued in 60 minutes or less. Land rescues were not as expeditious, with somewhat less than 40 percent being rescued in the first hour.

The principal problem encountered during the water entry and survival phases was that of entanglement in parachute lines and operation of parachute hardware. Other problems of significance occurred as a result of incapacitation by injuries, lack of signaling equipment, and fatigue and confusion on the part of the survivor. Principal problems during the recovery operation itself resulted from topography (rough seas, mountains, etc.), inadequate communication systems, and difficulties in use of rescue equipment.

Survivor's Recommendations

Each survivor was asked to list the principal problems he felt complicated the rescue process as well as his recommendations concerning ways in which the operation might be improved. Problem areas most often mentioned were:

1. *Condition of Survivor.* Many felt they were not in adequate physical condition to deal with the requirements of survival. Mental preparedness and the development of confidence in one's self and one's equipment were described as quite important. Finally, systems and procedures must be developed which minimize the likelihood of injury occurrence during the rescue process itself.

2. *Communications/Location.* The importance of survival radios in effecting rescue was universally stressed. Many aviators recommended carrying two dual-channel radios. The need for improved flares and other signaling equipment also was noted.

3. *Procedures.* The need for proper positioning at the time of ejection was discussed by many survivors. Those who did not have the proper position readily admitted this may have been instrumental in causing or compounding injuries. Many specific problems were noted with the procedures used during the helicopter pickup process.

4. *Escape, Survival, and Rescue Equipment.* A frequent recommendation was for a parachute that oscillates less, has some steerability, and incorporates improved shroudline release systems. The latter would be of particular value in lessening in-water entanglement problems. Lack of familiarity with specific items of rescue equipment, such as helicopter rescue seats, also was noted as being responsible in some instances for delays in recovery.

REFERENCES

Approach. Pyrotechnic signals for pilots. July 1971.

Hughes, J. E., & Schubert, J. C. Advanced survival avionics system study. ASD-TR-70-31. Aeronautical Systems Division, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, October 1970.

Naval Aviation News. SAR practice helps make perfect. June 1967.

Parker, J. F., Jr., & Bonner, L. T., Jr. Aeromedical problems in the rescue of downed airmen. Prepared for the Office of Naval Research, by BioTechnology, Inc., under Contract Nonr-4185(00). Washington, D.C., December 1969.

Shannon, R. H. An analysis of injuries incurred during emergency ejection/extraction, combat and noncombat. Paper presented at the *Seventh Annual SAFE Symposium*, Las Vegas, Nevada, 27-30 October 1969.

Till, A. N., Jr., & Shannon, R. H. Combat use of life support systems in Southeast Asia, 1 January 1967 to 30 June 1970. Paper presented at the *Eighth Annual SAFE Symposium*, Las Vegas, Nevada, 27 September to 1 October 1970.

OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH

Final Report

**AIRCRAFT ESCAPE AND SURVIVAL EXPERIENCES
OF NAVY PRISONERS OF WAR**

by

Martin G. Every
James F. Parker, Jr.

Contract No. N00014-72-C-0101
Task No. NR 105-667

August 1974

*Reproduction in whole or in part is permitted
for any purpose of the United States Government*

Distribution of this report is unlimited

BioTechnology, Inc.
3027 ROSEMARY LANE • FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	194
Procedures	195
Population	195
Coding, tabulating, and analysis	196
Results	197
Event data	197
Ejection Phase	200
Descent and landing	208
Survival and capture	212
Injury	215
Discussion and recommendations	218
Preejection	218
Ejection	219
Descent and landing	219
Survival and capture	220
References	223

AIRCRAFT ESCAPE AND SURVIVAL EXPERIENCES OF NAVY PRISONERS OF WAR

INTRODUCTION

The injury condition of an aviator who abandons a disabled aircraft can play a key role in determining his survival. Under noncombat conditions, a rescue craft normally is on the crash scene and intensive medical care is administered within a matter of minutes. Chances for survival, even with serious injuries, are excellent. Under combat conditions, however, an aviator's injuries significantly reduce his chances for rescue and for proper medical attention by impairing his ability to communicate with search-and-rescue forces and to activate life saving survival and signaling equipment. A combat injury, which might not be serious under noncombat conditions, often is compounded during attempts to evade the enemy or is aggravated by a hasty recovery attempt. The injured survivor jeopardizes search-and-rescue crews by his inability to assist effectively during the search and recovery phases. As a consequence, the operation is slowed, exposing SAR craft to increased hostile fire. If the survivor is captured, the significance of his injury is further compounded. During captivity, the severely injured may not receive any medical treatment or may be given only substandard aid. If the injured individual does survive captivity, it may well be with intense pain and involve permanent disability.

The objective of this study was to identify biomedical problems associated with escape and survival under combat conditions in Southeast Asia. In an effort to obtain the maximum data on the combat event, this study was divided into two phases. The first phase involved the collection of data from Navy airmen who were recovered after a combat mishap over enemy territory in Southeast Asia (Every & Parker, 1973). While the results of this initial phase elucidated many problems dealing with escape and rescue, it included only those personnel who, in terms of being rescued, were successful in dealing with the mishap. Therefore, any conclusions reached were considered in light of the fact that the escape and survival equipment and procedures worked at least well enough for these individuals to be recovered. This report deals primarily with the escape and survival experiences of those individuals who were not recovered and who became prisoners of war (POWs). Where appropriate, recovered and prisoner of war data are combined and referred to as combined combat data.

This report will show that the conditions and stresses found in the combat mishap are indeed different from those of the noncombat (operational) event. In some cases, these differences were directly responsible for the type and degree of injuries associated with the mishap and, as a result, have a definite bearing on the effectiveness and adequacy of escape, survival, and rescue equipment.

PROCEDURES

Population

In order to obtain the most meaningful data relative to the biomedical problems of Navy airmen under combat conditions, the "study population" was defined by the following qualifications:

Personnel:	Navy pilots and airmen
Aircraft:	Fixed-wing jet only; restricted to A-4, A-6, A-7, F-4, F-8, and RA-5C aircraft
Area of Loss:	Combat zone of Southeast Asia
Event:	Loss caused by or during enemy action (Direct Enemy Action Mishap - OPNAVINST 3750.6G/Para. 302.d.)
Status:	Repatriated prisoners of war



Navy aircrewman in combat flight gear.

Subsequent to the official debriefing, each of the repatriated prisoners of war was sent a copy of the Aviation Combat Casualty Report Form (BTI 73 - see Appendix A). This form was slightly modified from the BTI 72 form which was filled out by the combat-recovered airmen. To facilitate comparison, however, every attempt was made to keep both forms

compatible with the Medical Officers' Report of Aircraft Accident, Incident or Ground Accident OPNAV Form (3750/8), which is the form required for all operational aircraft accidents and incidents. One hundred and thirty-eight repatriated Navy prisoners of war were included in this mailing. One hundred and six questionnaires representing 77 percent of the mailing were returned completed. Of these, one hundred and two were returned in time to be included in the data tabulations presented in this report.

Coding, Tabulating, and Analysis

The information from all returned questionnaires was reduced and transferred onto 80-column punch cards for computer processing. All categories from the questionnaire were tallied and, where appropriate, cross-tallied with other categories. These statistics were then compared with data from the recovered group, Navy noncombat statistics, and Air Force data. These results and comparisons are presented in this report.

Injury classifications throughout this report were made using the instructions under "Injury Classification" of OPNAVINST 3750.6G:

Major Injury – Any injury requiring five days or more hospitalization and/or "sick in quarters." Also any of the following, regardless of hospitalization/sick in quarters time:

1. Unconsciousness due to head trauma (transient unconsciousness due to hypoxia, hyperventilation, G forces, etc., are not to be classified as injury).
2. Fractures of any bone except simple fracture of nose or phalanges.
3. Traumatic dislocation of major joints/internal derangement of the knee.
4. Moderate to severe lacerations resulting in severe hemorrhage, or extensive surgical repair.
5. Injury to any internal organ.
6. Any third degree burns. Any second degree burns involving more than five (5) percent of the body surface. Any friction burn regardless of degree that requires less than five days hospitalization or "sick in quarters" is classified as a minor injury.

Minor Injury – Any injury less than major which:

1. Results in the loss of 24 hours from full performance of regularly assigned duties, but less than five days.
2. Results in loss of regular working time for civilians beyond the day or shift on which injury occurs.
3. Hospitalization for observation not to exceed 48 hours from the time of admission is not classified as an injury.

No Injury – Minimal injuries which do not meet the criteria for minor injury.

RESULTS

Event Data

The ratio of types of aircraft involved in the prisoner of war mishaps is very similar to the ratio of aircraft types found in the recovered group (Every & Parker, 1973). One difference was a slightly higher ratio of multiplace aircraft (A-6, RA-5C, and F-4) in the POW group (Table 1).

Table 1
Aircraft Type Composing Combat Study Groups

Type	Recovered Aircraftmen Number	Prisoner of War Number
A-4	43	37
F-4	25	26
F-8	16	11
A-6	8	12
A-7	8	6
RA-5C	4	10
Total	104	102

The POW group included 76 pilots, 26 BNs, RANs, or RIOs, all of whom exited the aircraft utilizing the ejection seat. At the time of initial aircraft damage, the mean terrain clearance for this group was generally slightly higher than for the recovered group. However, the mean speeds were very similar (Table 2).

Table 2
Mean Speed at Time of Mishap
(KIAS)

	A-4	A-6	A-7	F-4	F-8	RA-5C
Recovered group	372	390	399	424	499	566
POW group	409	397	394	454	411	611



F-4 on combat mission in Southeast Asia.

A major difference between these two groups, during the initial phase of the mishap, was the greater degree of severe structural damage to the POW group aircraft. The severity of this damage allowed the POW aircrewmembers much less time to slow and control the aircraft before initiating ejection (Table 3). Just how little time the prisoner of war group had between the initial emergency and ejection is reflected in a comparison of emergency communications made prior to escape by the two groups (Table 4).

Table 3
Mean Times From Aircraft Damage Until Ejection

Type	Recovered Aircrewmen Mean Time (Min)	Prisoner of War Mean Time (Min)
A-4	10.3	1.0
A-6	13.8	.5
A-7	2.4	1.0
F-4	18.6	1.6
F-8	10.6	.5
RA-5C	2.1	.2

Table 4
Communications Prior to Escape

	Recovered Group	Prisoner of War Group
Distress signal transmitted	63%	36%
Position fix transmitted	48%	8%
Emergency IFF (Manual)	13%	12%
Emergency IFF (Automatic)	15%	16%
Unknown	6%	7%
None	21%	47%

The severity of initial aircraft damage resulted in four to five percent more pre-ejection injuries for the prisoner of war group than for the recovered group, with burns and lacerations representing the most frequent serious type of injury. There was a high incidence of unconsciousness during this phase with several aircrewmembers remembering almost nothing about the entire mishap until after capture (see Injury Section).

It would be very difficult to determine if fatigue played any significant role in these mishaps. There were, however, a number of POWs who mentioned either the demanding schedule or fatigue in some context when describing the mishap in their narrative. The following are excerpts from some of these narratives:

Case 96: Midnight to noon schedule - tired before mission - I felt about 60 percent. Did not see SAM - tail section blown off - A/c on fire, smoke in cockpit.

Case 130: The day prior to the incident, I flew three missions, the last terminated at 2130. We elected to watch the movie showing in the ready room as it had started while we were filling out the yellow sheet. About 15 minutes through the first reel, CAG called a special planning session for the next day's mission (0730 launch). We finished planning about 2330 and went to sleep about 2400. Arising at 0430 in order to eat prior to brief at 0530, we went to the wardroom where slightly delayed service got the food on the table about 0515. About 30 seconds later CAG called saying briefing time was 0515 now because a VIP would attend briefing and it would be necessary to give a nonabbreviated coverage for the uninitiated U.S. Army Brigadier General. No breakfast. After launch, we had difficulty fueling from the KA3B (three attempts to get fuel transfer light on the tanker). The launch was hairy (+3KTs on cat shot) settling into ground effect to stay in the air.

Case 43: I was up until 2200 replanning the flight schedule. I was scheduled for an 0300 Brief. At 0100, my squadron X.O. called and asked why the schedule wasn't signed by the C.O. I replied "It was late when I rewrote the schedule so I'll have him sign it tomorrow." The X.O. made me get up and take the schedule to the C.O. for signing. As it was 0145 when I finished, I stayed up until the briefing. The first flight was an abortion. Everything went wrong and I was extremely fatigued when I returned at about 0630. I had more work to do so I stayed up until 1000, brief time for my second hop. Brief and flight normal until I was hit by 37mm AA over the target.

Case 92: Due to alert the night prior to the hop, I received only 4½ hours sleep. Although this left me a little tired, I don't think it was particularly significant because my action would be the same under the identical circumstances.

Case 111: I admit I was tired prior to the mission — the "midnight to noon" schedule is a ball buster. Also, I was calloused and had little regard for known flak.

Ejection Phase

Preejection injury, uncontrollable aircraft, and difficulty locating the primary ejection handle were predominant reasons almost one-third of the prisoner of war group utilized the secondary (seat-pan) handle to initiate ejection. Table 5 compares aircraft attitudes at the time of escape for the recovered and prisoner of war groups.

Table 5
Aircraft Attitude at Time of Escape

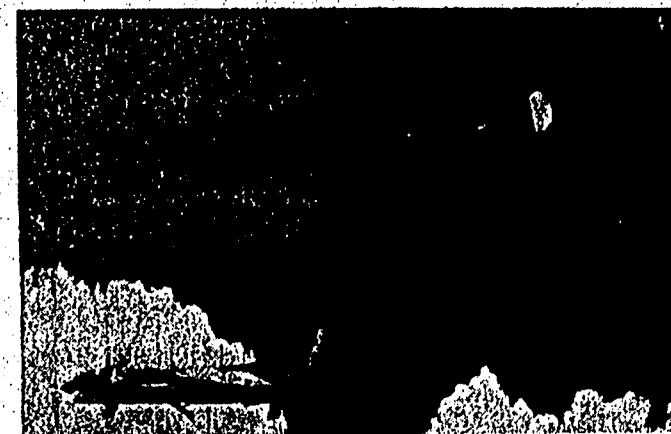
Attitude	Number of Times Reported	
	Recovered Group	POW Group
Nose down	32	57
Rolling	13	29
Right bank	11	13
Left bank	13	11
Tumbling	2	11
Inverted	6	9
Disintegration	1	8
Straight and level	29	7
Nose up	30	6
Nose down spin	0	6
Oscillating spin	0	3
Flat spin	1	2
Mushing	3	0

The table shows significantly fewer prisoner of war group aircraft in the straight and level position, and a much larger number that were spinning, rolling, tumbling, and/or disintegrating at the time of ejection. Although there was a higher percentage of POW group aircraft completely out of control at the time of ejection, a comparison of the two groups' body positions at the time of seat initiation shows about the same percentage in each group felt that they were in the optimum position for ejection (Table 6).

Table 6
Body Position at Ejection
(As compared to optimal)

	Head		Hips		Feet		Elbows	
	POW	Recovered	POW	Recovered	POW	Recovered	POW	Recovered
Optimal	79%	79%	88%	94%	87%	90%	83%	85%
Forward	15%	18%	3%	4%	7%	7%	7%	3%
Upward	2%	1%	7%	1%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Lateral	4%	2%	3%	1%	2%	0%	9%	1%

Several members of the POW group who utilized the secondary (seat-pan handle) method for ejection stated that they were definitely not in the optimum ejection position at seat initiation, which may have been a factor in causing further injury or compounding existing injuries during their ejection sequence.



Ejection from an F-8.

Unfortunately, because complete data do not exist on the missing and killed in action in Southeast Asia, no ejection survivability percentages are available to compare with the approximately 87 percent success rate found in noncombat ejections (Naval Safety Center, 1963 through 1972 data). The discussions in the POW questionnaire narratives on the unsuccessful ejections of some of those killed, and the statistics that are available from other sources, would indicate, however, that the ejection survival rate under combat conditions is lower than that found under noncombat conditions.

If the 0-to-500-foot (takeoff and landing mishap) category is omitted, altitudes at the time of ejection for the prisoner of war group present a curve similar to those of both the recovered and noncombat (operational) groups (Figure 1). Speed at time of ejection, however, shows very dissimilar curves (Figure 2). These differences are especially relevant in the high speed critical injury ranges (above 400 knots).

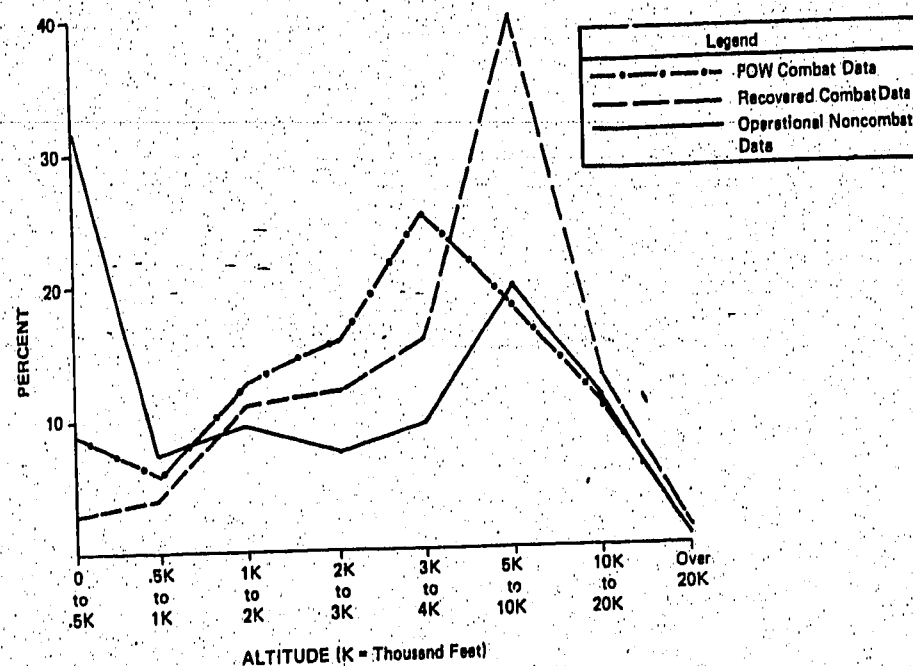


Figure 1. Combat versus operational ejection altitudes.

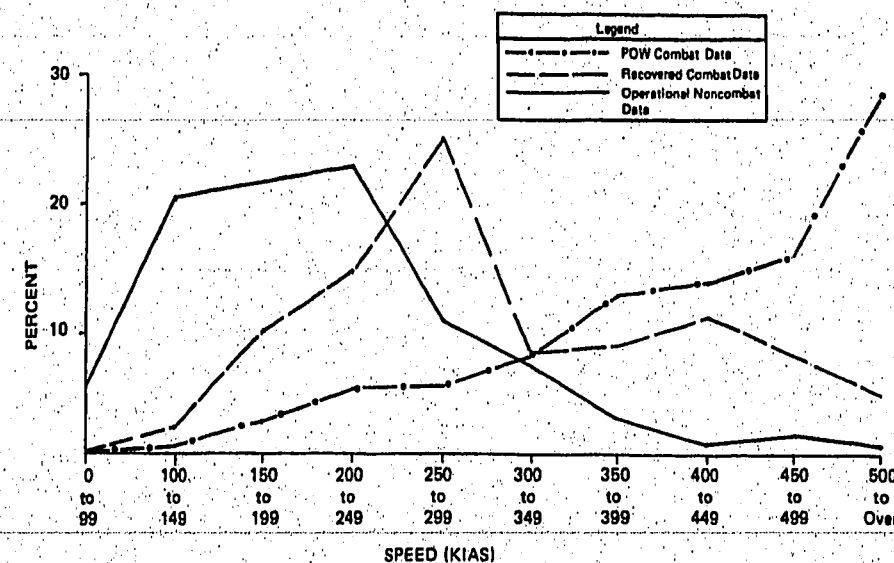


Figure 2. Combat versus operational ejection speeds.

Table 7 gives a breakdown of ejection speeds for the POW group by aircraft type, and a comparison of combat ejection speed ranges with noncombat ranges. It can be seen from the information presented in this table that 61 percent of the prisoners of war ejected at speeds greater than 400 KIAS, while only five percent of the operational (noncombat) group ejected at speeds that high. Nine percent of the prisoner of war group ejected at speeds in excess of 600 knots.

Table 7
Ejection Speeds for Nonfatal Mishaps

Speed (KIAS)	Prisoner of War Aircraft Type						Percent		
	A-4	A-6	A-7	RA-5C	F-4	F-8	POW Combat 1964 - 1973 (94 cases)	Recovered Combat 1966 - 1972 (102 cases)	Operational 1966 - 1970 (794 cases)
0 - 99							0	0	6.4
100 - 149					1		1.1	2.9	20.7
150 - 199	2					1	3.2	10.8	22.0
200 - 249	3		1		2		6.4	15.7	23.3
250 - 299	3		1		2		6.4	25.5	11.2
300 - 349	3		1		3	1	8.5	8.8	7.7
350 - 399	5	4			2	2	13.8	9.8	3.7
400 - 449	4	5	2	1	2		14.9	11.8	1.5
450 - 499	5	2	1		5	3	17.0	8.8	2.4
500 & over	8	1		7	7	4	28.7	5.9	1.1

Ejection speeds from the prisoner of war group and the recovered group were combined to represent the combat event. These data were compared with noncombat data presented in Figure 3. The comparison makes it apparent that over 40 percent of all combat ejections involved speeds in excess of 400 KIAS.

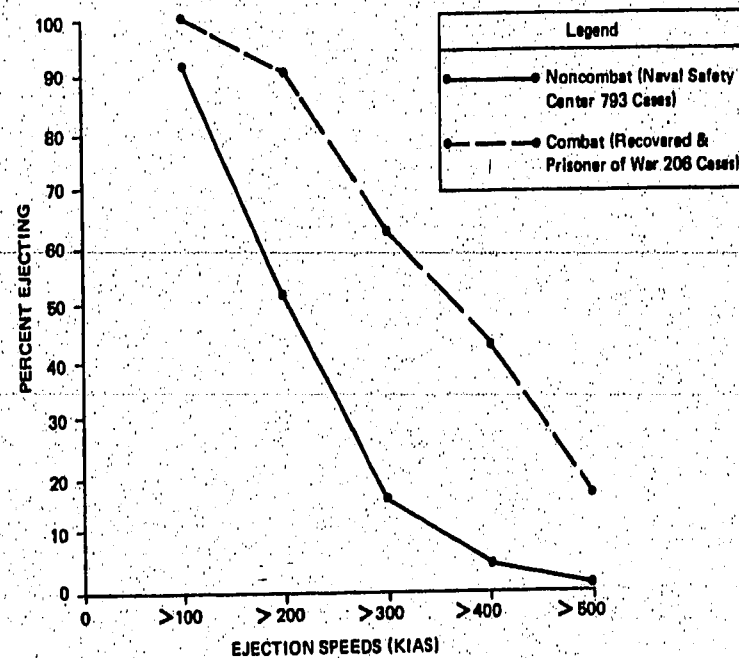


Figure 3. Comparison of nonfatal combat and nonfatal operational ejection speeds.

The following is a prisoner of war's narration of his high speed ejection:

With one smooth uninterrupted pull I initiated the ejection. The noise of the wind was terrific. Then the seat fired and away I went. The windblast was indescribable! I separated from the seat almost instantly as the "G" came off and I became a free agent at 500 kts. My left hand apparently gripped the curtain handle more than did the right and I distinctly felt the right hand tear free while the left proceeded rearward with great force (being still attached to the handle, which was still attached to the seat). I felt the left shoulder dislocate, followed shortly by the right (the right arm and elbow going from head level directly

aft from windblast) then the curtain cutter fired and the seat was gone. Now both arms were in trail, as were my legs, and I flew through the air with everything flailing wildly, powerless to stop it. There was a considerable delay in the chute deployment, plenty long enough for my mind to clear and wonder when I'd have a chute (this experience differed from a combat associated ejection at 200 kts., 1000 feet I'd had two months previously). After a bit I was starting to become alarmed and was about to pull the D-ring, when I felt the chute leave the pack. It seemed to stream for a few seconds, then opened with a loud "crack." Opening shock was severe, considerably more "G" than seat-firing. My helmet, chin and nape straps secure and tight, visor down, had been twisted 90° to starboard. With difficulty I straightened the helmet saw where my aircraft had contacted the water, and took a look at my chute. Two gores were almost completely gone, another was badly torn and there were small rips and tears throughout the canopy. With great and increasing difficulty I disconnected my O₂ mask (still hissing nicely). Incidentally my watch, gloves and curtain handle were all hooked upon the very tips of my "talon-like" fingers after chute opening.

The high speeds and resultant Q forces encountered during the ejection phase were the primary causes of windblast injuries and extremity flailing, and, as a consequence, were directly responsible for the large number of major injuries occurring during this phase of the mishap. Comparisons of degree of injury by aircraft type for the ejection phase and for the entire mission are shown in Table 8. Of all major and minor injuries incurred during the mishap, approximately 60 percent were sustained during the ejection phase. Of POWs sustaining major injuries, 77 percent received them during this phase. Prisoner of war ejection speed data were combined with recovered group data to show a composite representation of the degree of injury associated with ejection speeds for Southeast Asia air combat mishaps (Table 9).

Injuries during these high speed ejections were primarily to the upper and lower extremities (fractures and dislocations) and to the spine (compression fractures). Table 10 gives a breakdown of total injuries by location and time of occurrence. A complete list of the frequency and types of injuries is presented in the "Injury" section of this report. The types and degree of injury during the descent and evasion phases for the prisoner of war group were similar to those found in the recovered group. There was, however, a higher rate of injury to the prisoner of war group during the capture phase than to the recovered group during the rescue phase.

Table 8

Degree of Injury Sustained During Ejection and by the Time of Capture

	Percent of Ejection Injuries			Percent of Injuries at Time of Capture		
	Major	Minor	None	Major	Minor	None
A-4	44	14	42	52	24	24
A-6	50	25	25	68	17	17
A-7	33	17	50	33	17	50
F-4	28	24	48	42	35	23
F-8	27	27	46	46	27	27
FA-5C	60	20	20	80	10	10
Overall	40	19	41	52	25	23

Table 9

Degree of Ejection Injury Versus Ejection Speed
(Combined Prisoner of War and Recovered Data)

Speed (KIAS)	Ejection Injury (Percent)	
	Major	Minor
0 - 99	0	0
100 - 199	11	44
200 - 299	11	33
300 - 399	30	23
400 - 499	41	26
>500	58	21

Table 10

Major and Minor Injuries by Location and Time of Occurrence for POW's

	Pre-Ejection	During Ejection	During Descent	After Descent	During Capture	Unknown	Total	Percent
Head	8	20		1	12	4	45	18%
Neck	3	11	3		1		18	7%
Upper extremities	10	53	1	2	5	2	73	29%
Spine	1	23		1			25	10%
Torso	1	7		1	1		10	4%
Lower extremities	9	37	8	8	3	8	73	29%
Other		4	1		2	3	10	4%
Total	32	155	13	13	24	17	254	
Percent	13%	61%	5%	5%	9%	7%		



Ejection seat separation.

Through-the-canopy ejection appeared to result in a disproportionate number of severe lacerations. Combining prisoner of war and recovered group data from survivors utilizing this method of escape reveals that of 16 through-the-canopy (primary sequence) ejections, 50 percent resulted in major injuries, many involving severe lacerations. Of the five who jettisoned the canopy prior to ejection, there were no major injuries (Table 11).

Table 11

Degree of Ejection Injury Versus Mode of Ejection
for A-6 Combat (Recovered & POW) Mishaps

	Mean Speed	Degree of Ejection Injury		
		Major	Minor	None
Thru-the-Canopy (N = 16)	360	50%	25%	25%
Jettison Canopy (N = 5)	317	0%	60%	40%

The various egress difficulties of both the recovered and prisoner of war groups are listed in Table 12. In both groups, high aircraft speed at time of ejection appears to be the primary cause of most of the difficulties. The prisoner of war group experienced a noticeably higher incidence of difficulty in several categories, such as G forces and difficulty in locating/reaching the normal ejection mechanism. These difficulties relate directly to the high percentage of aircraft which were out of control and in an unfavorable attitude at the time of ejection. In some cases, the forces associated with high speed ejection combined with an equipment malfunction to produce injury.

I used the face curtain method and everything worked automatically. When I separated from the seat, I still had hold of the face curtain. The curtain was still attached to the seat and by clinging to the curtain, my arm was violently pulled behind my back and my shoulder dislocated.

Ejection at these speeds was responsible for the loss of personal protective equipment and survival gear, both from the direct effects of windblast and from forces associated with parachute opening. Nineteen percent of the prisoner of war group reported severe parachute opening shock. Sixteen percent of the aircrewmembers reported that they lost their helmets during the ejection-descent sequence. Another four percent reported intentionally removing their helmets prior to landing. Twelve aircrewmembers reported that the zero delay lanyard was a contributing factor in survival. Eight individuals reported manually releasing their ejection seat lap belts.

The prisoner of war evaluation of the value of ejection training, while less favorable than that of the recovered groups, was generally positive (Table 13).

Descent and Landing

The injury rate during descent and landing was relatively low when contrasted with the high number of injuries incurred during the ejection phase (Table 10). Most of the problems the prisoners of war encountered were similar to those experienced by the recovered groups (Table 14). The prisoner of war group did have less parachute entanglement, chiefly because very few came down in deep open water (Table 15).

A large number of the prisoners of war who ejected over land came down in rice paddies. This allowed for a soft landing which may have been a major factor responsible for the relatively few landing injuries incurred by this group. Coming down over water-filled paddies did pose one hazard in that it was difficult for the crewmen from the air to judge the depth of the water and to decide whether or not it was safe to drop out of their parachutes. (See narrative on page 17)

Table 12
Egress Difficulties

Egress Difficulty	Percent of Recovered Cases Reporting	Percent of Prisoner of War Cases Reporting
Buffeting	11	11
G forces	8	27
Windblast	20	24
Difficulty locating canopy/jettison mechanism	1	1
Hampered by clothing	2	2
Hampered by equipment (including body armor)	6	6
Hampered by injuries	8	6
Difficulty releasing canopy/hatch	3	2
Failure to release canopy/hatch	2	0
Difficulty locating/reaching normal ejection mechanism	7	17
Difficulty locating/reaching alternate ejection mechanism	2	4
Face curtain failed to activate seat	2	4
Face curtain problem (locating, reaching, etc.)	2	12
Seat pan firing handle failed to activate seat	2	5
Seat pan firing handle problem		1
Canopy/jettison problem	4	4
Canopy/jettison failure (automatic means)	1	2
Could not open canopy/hatch	1	1
Difficulty releasing restraints	2	0
Pinned down in aircraft		2
Confusion/panic/disorientation	6	5
Darkness - no visual reference	3	4
Fire/smoke/fuel	10	12
Anthropometric problem (size/build)	1	2
Personal equipment factor (other than hangup)	3	7
Upper extremities hit cockpit structures	3	9
Lower extremities hit cockpit structures	7	7
Man struck canopy/canopy bow	3	1
Falling - upper extremities	13	17
Falling - lower extremities	13	12
Unconscious/dazed	9	16

Table 13
Ejection Seat Training

	Training Definite Help	Training Possible Help	Training No Help	Training Role Unknown
Lectures and demonstrations	73%	17%	7%	3%
Unarmed ejection seat	70%	15%	10%	5%
Training films	59%	28%	8%	4%
Armed seat on tower	72%	18%	7%	3%

The chute opened immediately and I discarded both my helmet and O₂ mask as soon as I had gathered my senses. I was descending toward what looked like a reservoir and tried to slip the chute with no success. I tried my radio which was strapped to my torso harness and hanging inside my MK3C, but it would not work. I suspect that it hit the canopy bow on the way out of the aircraft. By that time, I was a few feet off the water and I let go the Koch fittings and dropped into the water. Unfortunately, the reservoir was a flooded rice paddy and the water was only a couple of feet deep. Because of this, I sunk up to my waist in mud. By the time I struggled ashore and got rid of my torso harness and "g", suit, there were North Vietnamese coming from both directions along the dike.

Table 14

Problems During Descent and Landing

Problem	Percent of Recovered Group Reporting	Percent of POW Cases Reporting
Drogue swinging at man	3	2
Drogue slug struck man	4	1
Man struck by other equipment	4	3
Man struck by seat	3	2
Seat separation difficulty	3	2
Seat/parachute entanglement	2	0
Man tangled in chute risers — major	5	1
Man tangled in chute risers — minor	12	5
Man held on to seat	1	0
Tumbling/spinning	9	9
Parachute did not open properly	4	2
Parachute streamed partially	1	0

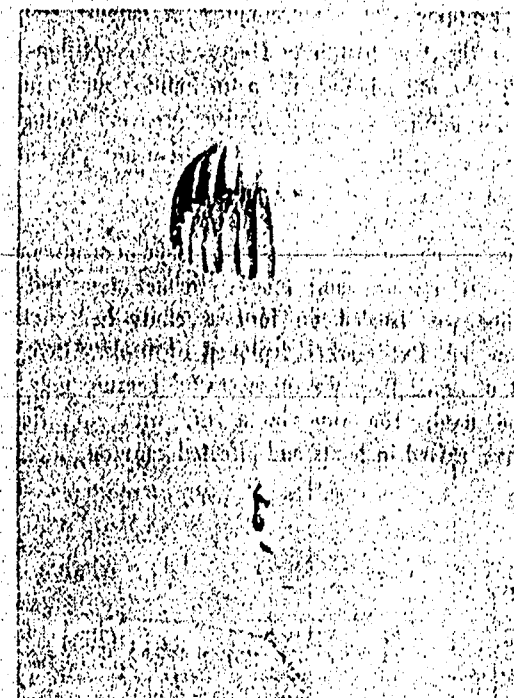
Table 15

Parachute Landing Terrain

	Land	Water
Prisoner of war group (102 cases)	90%	10%*
Recovered group (104 cases)	27%	73%

* Includes 5% in open ocean and 5% in lake, river or other deep water.

Parachute opening shock was the predominate cause of ten parachutes' sustaining missing panels or major tears. A significantly smaller percentage (14 percent) of the prisoners of war reported moderate or severe parachute oscillation as compared to the 50 percent of the recovered group who reported such oscillations. The majority of injuries suffered in landing were lower extremity injuries caused by improper landing, head injuries resulting from improper falling, and lacerations suffered while going through trees and brush.



Parachute descent after successful ejection.

The need for a flyaway parasail system or steerable parachute was mentioned by a number of the prisoners of war. Many felt they needed something that would have at least allowed them to reach an area where they might have had a chance for evasion and recovery.

I came down in a group of peasants and had no chance for escape and evasion or rescue. If my seat had been equipped with a "parasail" type folding wing and longer duration rocket or jet engine that had a range of five miles, I could have gotten to a safe rescue area. (The aircraft crashed in the water but a sea breeze blew me about 1 or 3 miles inland.)

In many cases, because capture was almost immediate after landing, the only possible time for communications was during parachute descent. Many of the survivors who attempted radio communication at this time found it very difficult, especially with the helmet on.

Survival and Capture

Relatively few of the prisoner of war group had any chance for escape and evasion. Sixty-six percent were captured within ten minutes of landing, and almost 90 percent were captured by the end of the first half hour (Figure 4). In addition to being forced to eject deep in enemy territory, the other important factor limiting successful escape and evasion was the high degree of major injuries sustained by the survivors during an earlier phase of the mishap. In some cases, these injuries not only physically prevented movement but also precluded effective use of survival or signaling equipment.

Apparently all done instinctively while unconscious despite broken right forearm and elbow. Helmet remained on. One shroud line was tangled on foot as chute had sunk but was easily removed. Dye marker deployed by itself. Attempt to light day end of signal flare was unsuccessful because only one hand could be used. The ring broke off with no effect. North Vietnamese arrived in boats and effected capture.

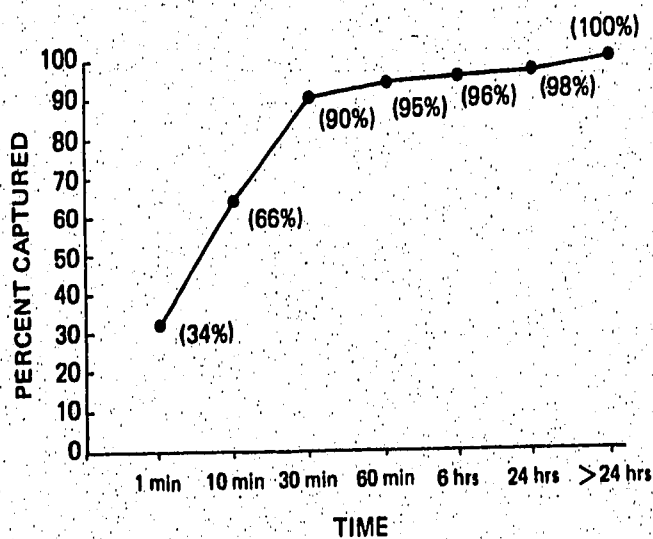


Figure 4. Time of capture for prisoner of war group.

Many of the problems encountered by the prisoner of war group during the survival phase of the mishap were similar to those undergone by the recovered group (Table 16). The predominance of any one type of problem in the prisoner of war group over that found in the recovered group was due essentially to different types and rates of injury and to the fact that more of the prisoners of war experienced land survival than did the recovered group who mostly came down over water. Extreme thirst suffered both before and after capture was one problem directly associated with the high injury rate and commented upon by a number of the prisoners of war. All of these survivors recommended increasing the supply of water available during survival situations. While darkness was noted as a problem by one survivor in this group, in most cases lack of darkness was considered the problem.

Table 16
Problems Encountered During Survival

Problem	Number of Times Encountered	
	Recovered	Prisoner of War
Parachute entanglement	25	9
Incapacitated by injury	13	20
Lack of signaling equipment	8	8
Fatigue	8	9
Parachute hardware problems	8	2
Confused, dazed, disoriented	7	8
Inadequate flotation gear	6	1
Pulled down by sinking parachute	6	2
Thirst	5	15
Darkness	5	1
Dragging parachute	5	2
Unfamiliar with procedures/equipment	5	1
Topography	5	8
Insects, snakes, animals, etc.	4	1
Weather	3	1
Entanglement (other than parachute)	3	0
Sharks	3	0
Lack of other equipment	2	3
Poor physical condition	2	4

Since two-thirds of this group were captured in the first ten minutes, there was relatively little use of survival equipment. The problems with individual pieces of equipment which were reported by the prisoners of war were combined with the problems reported by the recovered group, and are presented in Table 17. This table is introduced to show the types of problems found under combat conditions and should in no way be construed as a performance evaluation of the equipment. Much of this same equipment worked very well for the prisoner of war group and was listed by the recovered group as instrumental in effecting their successful recovery. A large number of problems with any particular piece of equipment does not necessarily reflect upon that equipment's performance; however it does reflect upon the degree of usage by and dependency of the airmen on that equipment.

Table 17
Survival and Rescue Equipment Problems Reported by Navy Prisoners of War
and Recovered Aircrewmen in Southeast Asia (206 cases)

Equipment	Problems																	Total Problems															
	Not Available	Supply Problem	Discarded	Lost	Damaged Minor	Damaged Major	Destroyed by Extreme Force/Fire	Failed to Operate	Operated Partially	Difficulty Locating	Beyond Reach	Release/Disconnect Difficulty	Inadequate Attachment	Inadvertent Activation	Activation Difficulty	Activation Failure	Injury		Hindered Use	Water	Other Equip. Interfered	Discomfort/Bulkiness	Leaked	Material Deficiency	Design Deficiency	Hangup/Entanglement	Entanglement	Minor	Not Effective in Location Rescue	Equipment Produced Injury	Maintenance/Installation Error	Equip. Damage	Self-Induced
Clothing (General)																																	
Gloves																																	
Survival Vest																																	
Anti G-Suit																																	
Helmets																																	
(Type not spec.)																																	
Oxygen Mask																																	
Oxygen Hose																																	
Life Vest																																	
(Type not spec.)																																	
MK-3C																																	
Air Force or LPU Type																																	
Life Raft																																	
RSSK or Seat Pan																																	
Survival Radio or Beepers (not spec.)																																	
AN/PRC-63																																	
AN/PRC-49																																	
AN/PRC-80																																	
Parachute																																	
MK-13 Flare (End not spec.)																																	
MK-13 Flare (Day end)																																	
Pen Gun-Pencil Flare																																	
.38-Cal. Tracers																																	
Mirror																																	
Water Container																																	
SEK Kit																																	
First Aid Kit																																	
Survival Knife, Regulation																																	
Shroud Cutter																																	
.38 Cal. Revolver																																	
Stroblight																																	

Almost all of the aircrewmen felt that survival training was adequate for the escape and evasion phases. (Some admitted to probably doing the wrong thing during escape and evasion; however, they felt that it was usually just an error in judgment on their part.) Many of the prisoner of war survivors felt that they should have had additional training in advanced first aid to treat such injuries as fractures and dislocations. They thought this training should also include preventive medicine and discussion of the types of medications that can be obtained from nature, or from what might be available during captivity.

Injury

Table 18 compares the type of injuries sustained by the prisoners of war up to the time of capture and by the recovered group through rescue. The prisoners' higher incidence of extremity fractures, spinal compression fractures, and dislocations can be attributed primarily to the high speed ejections, while the higher incidence of burns and open wounds can be attributed to pre-ejection injuries. In both cases, most of the severe injuries occurred during the early phases of the mishap, decreasing the survivor's chances for success in the later escape and evasion phases of the event.

Table 18

Types of Precapture Injuries Reported by Navy
POW Group (102 cases) and Recovered Group (104 cases)

Injury	Number of Times Reported		Injury	Number of Times Reported	
	Recovered	POW		Recovered	POW
Contusions	40	15	Muscle tear	5	4
Strains	25	23	Open wounds	4	19
Lacerations (severe)	24	24	Abrasions	2	1
Small cuts	24	33	Acoustic trauma	1	0
Fractures (simple and compound)	22	40	Amputation of arm	1	0
General overall pain	13	6	Amputation of finger	0	1
Burns (1st, 2nd, and 3rd degree)	10	19	Concussion	1	0
Sprains (major)	10	18	Hematoma	1	0
Spinal compression (fractures)	8	14	Dislocation	1	21
Blindness	0	11	Disease (malaria)	1	0
Avulsion	0	2	Crushing injury	0	1
Bite	0	1	Unconsciousness	0	6

The classification of injuries into categories of major, minor, or none is highly subjective, even within the Navy, and somewhat imprecise because of the number of borderline cases which can fit into either category. This is especially true of this study because not all of the medical data surrounding the injury are available. In order to compare the degree of injuries described here with Navy operational and Air Force combat ejection data, a categorization was attempted using the information supplied by respondents in the injury data portion of the questionnaire, together with information from the descriptive narrative. The information was then coded according to the instructions under "Injury Classifications" of OPNAVINST 3750.6G. The results of the classifications, along with the Naval Safety Center operational ejection data and Air Force combat ejection data (Till & Shannon, 1970), are shown in Table 19.

Table 19
Nonfatal Injury Comparison

	Major	Minor	None
Navy POW Combat (102 cases)	52%	25%	23%
Navy Recovered Combat (104 cases) ¹	29%	43%	28%
Navy Operational (805 cases) ²	19%	37%	44%
Air Force Recovered Combat (262 cases) ³	13%	57%	31%

¹ Every & Parker, 1973; ² Naval Safety Center, 1973; ³ Till & Shannon, 1970.

The severity of initial aircraft damage and the subsequent necessity for high speed ejection found in the prisoner of war mishaps noticeably increased the percent of major injuries over that found in the recovered and noncombat groups. The table shows that over one-half of the prisoners of war were suffering from major injuries at the time of capture. It will never be possible to fully ascertain how many of this group might have been more successful in evasion had they not been so severely injured or how many aircrewmen did not survive because a specific, normally nonfatal injury interfered with their ability to operate survival gear. Several individuals in this group almost did not survive because this type of injury inhibited the use of an extremity. The following narrative is from a survivor who suffered an arm fracture and dislocation.

After landing, I began to moan but couldn't figure out why. I couldn't release the parachute, and again, I couldn't figure out why I couldn't raise my arms to release the snaps. I began to suffocate, my emergency (4 minutes) supply of O₂ ran

out — (less than 4 minutes), and I finally worked my fingers of my right hand under the lower edge of the mask. (My helmet was jammed far forward and down upon my face — and I thought at the time that the fittings that held the mask to the helmet were jammed.)

The significance of any injury received by an aircrewman prior to capture is magnified by the condition and treatment he must endure while in captivity. These conditions, as they applied to the Southeast Asian conflict, were discussed by Dr. R. S. Wilbur, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health and Environment), in a press conference following repatriation of the prisoners of war (Wilbur, 1973).

Q: What is your professional opinion of the medical treatment these men received?

A: Are you speaking about during captivity?

Q: Yes.

A: It was far from adequate. There were two reasons for that. First, particularly in the early years, little, if any, was presented to the men. In the later years, more was presented. A second problem is that there was a fair amount of concern on the part of the men themselves that the treatment was not in their best interest, and they tended to avoid treatment if they possibly could and to use self-treatment with surprisingly good results in taking care of each other. Of course, those who Dr. Kushner took care of were receiving American professional treatment, although without the benefit of much in the way of medication or supplies.

Q: One of the big questions that came up with the release was the fact that there was not a single amputee among the returnees. Based upon your professional experience, how do you explain that?

A: I haven't yet seen a list of those who didn't come back and why they didn't come back, medically. One has to have a feeling that those, particularly in the southern camps, who were so sick that they might lose a limb simply failed to keep up with the Viet Cong in their moves and they are not here. That is an impression, not a fact derived from any of these figures. This would be one of the explanations for their not being here. What we're seeing here are survivors. We don't see those who didn't live. We know from what the prisoners of war have told us that there were many who did not survive.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Preejection

The type and degree of initial aircraft damage found under combat conditions complicates the escape event from the very onset of the mishap. Escape conditions following anti-aircraft ordnance damage are frequently compounded by the aircraft's relatively low altitude and high speed during the time this damage is most often sustained. Consequently, the aircrewman has little time to position himself properly, communicate distress signals, or describe the extent of his injuries prior to ejection.

Preejection injuries resulting from exploding ordnance were predominantly burns and lacerations. In many cases, these injuries, along with the G forces resulting from out of control aircraft, made ejection seat initiation difficult, especially when the aircrewmembers attempted to utilize the primary (face curtain) system. Aircraft speed, attitude, sink rate, and altitude are all extremely critical in effecting a safe ejection. Possibly, some of the aircrewmembers who ejected out of the envelope could have improved their chances for escape without major injury if they had had some single indicator giving them a real-time ejection status report as to the combined effects of the variables.

Ejection training was considered valuable by these survivors. Some who had difficulty reaching the ejection initiation mechanisms because of adverse G forces felt better restraint systems were needed. Others stressed that, at a minimum, restraint straps should always be very securely tightened during combat operations. The necessity of properly wearing protective equipment, especially under combat conditions, was emphasized repeatedly. Those who suffered burns, because they were not wearing gloves or had their shirt sleeves rolled up, were testimony to the fact that not following correct procedures can cause or greatly increase the degree of injury.

A need was expressed for better emergency intraplane communication between fore and aft crewmembers in two-place aircraft. In some cases, lack of communication meant no warning prior to a sequenced ejection, and resulted in poor body position for the unsuspecting ejected crewman. Reliable external communications are also very important under combat conditions, especially when there is a high rate of immediate capture such as occurred in Southeast Asia. The preejection period was often the only time a survivor had to communicate before he was captured.

Ejection

Most injuries occurred during the ejection seat initiation to parachute deployment phase of the escape. The majority of these injuries were due to extremity flailings associated with the Q forces inherent in high speed ejections. The upper and lower extremities sustained a high percentage of major injuries, predominantly dislocations and multiple fractures from flailing. The evidence from the prisoner of war group indicates that present arm and leg restraint systems are not adequate to protect the escaping survivor from the forces associated with high speeds. Spinal compression fractures were reported in 14 percent of the prisoner of war group. However, it appears that this problem, as it relates to ejection seat initiation, has been somewhat alleviated by the use of the rocket seat which significantly decreases the peak G forces during initial seat sequence.

Through-the-canopy ejections resulted in a disproportionate number of severe lacerations. Of the 16 survivors who ejected through the canopy, 50 percent sustained major injuries and many of these involved severe lacerations. There were no major injuries to the five survivors who jettisoned the canopy prior to ejection. It appears from these figures that intensive investigations are warranted on the advantages of utilizing through the canopy as a primary method of escape in future aircraft systems. The windblast associated with the high speed ejections was responsible for tearing loose personal protective and survival equipment, the loss of which could have severely hampered the survivor's chances for escape and recovery. This was especially true when the equipment was incorrectly worn or when there had been a fire in the cockpit subsequent to ejection which destroyed some of the structural integrity of the materials used to connect survival equipment to the aircrewmembers.

Descent and Landing

Relatively few problems or injuries were experienced during descent and landing primarily because many of the prisoners of war landed on soft, open, marshy terrain. This type of landing decreased impact and minimized the number of serious parachute entanglements. In contrast the recovered group, most of whom came down in deep water, suffered a high degree of parachute entanglement. The soft, marshy terrain did have one serious drawback in that it afforded very poor cover for escape and evasion.

Some of the aircrewmembers attempted to utilize parachute descent time for communications. Their efforts usually were unsuccessful because the equipment or its storage location was not suited for this type of usage. The quick capture rate described in this study attest to the desirability of a flyaway ejection system under combat conditions. In several cases, even a steerable parachute might have given some of the aircrewmembers a better chance for rescue.

Nine percent of the recovered group and 16 percent of the prisoner of war group reported being unconscious or dazed during the egress phase of the mishap. Fortunately, most of them came down over land or recovered consciousness during descent. There are no statistics on how many did not regain consciousness, or had both arms broken, landed in deep water and drowned because of uninflated life preservers or inability to clear themselves from parachute entanglement. The new automatic inflating Man-Safe systems under development should greatly alleviate these problems.

Some suggestions, from the prisoners of war, about this phase include:

1. Stress, during training, that when descending in a parachute over what appears to be a large body of water, do not drop out of the parachute because, as was experienced by members of this group, you may either miscalculate your height above the water or the water may be only a few inches deep.
2. Specifically mark (for in-air identification) and camouflage parachutes better.
3. Use descent time to figure out what you are going to do. It is the best time to look over the terrain for areas of maximum cover and optimum rescue sites.

Survival and Capture

Almost two thirds of the prisoner of war group were captured in the first ten minutes after parachute landing. For them, there was virtually no escape and evasion phase. Most did not even have time to communicate or administer emergency self-first aid. Some of those who might have had a chance for evasion and recovery were so badly injured that concealing themselves in a hiding place was beyond their capability. Many who suffered major injuries felt that the biggest drawback to survival was their inability to treat various types of serious injuries, some of which later became infected and extremely painful during captivity. Other prisoner of war recommendations dealing with this phase of the mishap include:

1. Gear survival training to man operating alone.
2. Supply more detailed geographic/topographic maps of the area of combat operations for use in escape and evasion.
3. Upon landing, immediately find a hiding place and then plan your course of action.
4. Give more training on nighttime navigation and evasion.
5. Do not wear aftershave lotion.
6. If capture appears imminent, include physical condition in first radio transmission.
7. Always carry and know how to use a good miniature compass.

8. Have a five-day supply of food with you.
9. Keep propeller-driven aircraft on combat rescue patrol.
10. Make sure flight suit is camouflaged to combat theater.
11. Keep in top physical condition.
12. Carry more water for survival.
13. Include scissors and a bolo knife in survival gear.
14. Streamline personal survival gear so it is not lost during high speed ejection.
15. Make survival and signaling equipment for use when injured and with quieter activation.

Because of the nature of the combat theater in Southeast Asia, the majority of prisoners of war in this group felt that, given their circumstances, very little could have been done to avoid capture. There were several cases, however, when better communications, straffing support, faster SAR helicopters, and perhaps some good luck would have made the difference between rescue and capture. Recommendations which these survivors felt would have better prepared them for capture and imprisonment include:

1. When capture is inevitable, do not resist or make any motions which might be interpreted as resisting during surrender.
2. More training and preparing for what might be expected as a prisoner of war should be given.
3. More training in self-medication and first aid for treating a severely injured cell mate is needed.

In conclusion, the severity of initial aircraft damage and the subsequent necessity for high speed ejection encountered in the prisoner of war mishaps noticeably increased the percent of major injuries to them over those experienced by the recovered and noncombat groups. We can never fully ascertain how many of these prisoners might have been more successful in evasion had they not been so severely injured, or how many aircrewmembers did not survive because a normally nonfatal injury interfered with the ability to operate survival gear. What is certain is that the combat mishap is different from the operational event. These differences, in some cases, were directly responsible for the types and degrees of injuries associated with the mishap and, therefore, had a definite bearing on the effectiveness and adequacy of survival and rescue equipment used under these severe conditions.

While any major injury is important in itself, when injury is coupled with the rigors of capture, torture, and long-term incarceration under the conditions that were found in Southeast Asia, the result may mean months of agonizing pain, permanent injury, and, quite possibly, death. Consequently, for moral as well as for economic reasons, a primary requirement behind the development of all escape and survival equipment must be to protect the aircrewman through as wide a range of potentially lethal conditions as possible, especially those inherent in the combat mishap. The alternatives to rescue in enemy territory dictate that every aircrewman be given, at a minimum, the optimum chance for escape, evasion, and, ultimately, safe rescue.

REFERENCES

Every, M. G., & Parker, J. F., Jr. A review of problems encountered in the recovery of Navy aircrewmen under combat conditions. Prepared by BioTechnology, Inc. under Contract N00014-72-C-0101, Office of Naval Research, Washington, D.C., June 1973.

Till, A. N., Jr., & Shannon, R. H. Combat use of life support systems in Southeast Asia, 1 January 1967 to 30 June 1967. Paper presented at the Eighth Annual SAFE Symposium, Las Vegas, Nevada, September 1970.

U.S. Naval Safety Center. Compendium of Aero Medical Statistical Data. Prepared by Life Sciences Department, Naval Safety Center, Norfolk, Virginia, 1971.

Wilbur, R. S. Medical aspects of Operation Homecoming. *Medical Service Digest*, 1973, 24, 25-29.

**THE BIOMEDICAL ASPECTS
OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT ESCAPE AND SURVIVAL
FOR NAVY PRISONERS OF WAR**

Office of Naval Research Contract
N00014-72-C-0101
Task No. NR 105-667

*Proceedings of an Invited Conference
held 5 April 1975 at*

**BIOTECHNOLOGY, INC.
3027 Rosemary Lane
Falls Church, Virginia**

(225)

Foreword

This is the report of an invited conference held on 5 April 1975 at BioTechnology, Inc. The purpose was to review a program to define the problems of combat aircraft escape for Navy aircrewmembers. This program is being conducted by BioTechnology, Inc. under the monitorship of LCDR Kenneth H. Dickerson, MSC, USN, Office of Naval Research, and Captain Frank H. Austin, Jr., MC, USN, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

This report was prepared principally to provide a record for conference attendees. It is not intended for wide distribution or citation, since the results presented by BioTechnology, Inc. are considered preliminary in form and comments by participants have been heavily edited and not reviewed subsequently by the participants. A final technical report dealing with the materials presented here is scheduled for August 1975.

Introduction

James F. Parker, Jr., Ph.D.
BioTechnology, Inc.

The first minutes of the conference were devoted to welcoming the attendees on behalf of BioTechnology, Inc. The background for the conference and general objectives which it was hoped to achieve were presented at this time.

The general purpose of the conference was to review a BioTechnology, Inc. study program dealing with problems of escape from Navy aircraft under combat conditions. This program, begun in October 1971, was conducted under contract to the Office of Naval Research, with technical guidance provided by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. The principal objectives of the program were (1) to identify unique biomedical problems associated with the escape and survival of Navy aircrewmembers under combat conditions in Southeast Asia, and (2) to develop a computerized data base for use in detailed studies of specific biomedical issues. The following two technical reports were prepared earlier as part of this effort:

Every, M.G., & Parker, J.F., Jr. A review of problems encountered in the recovery of Navy aircrewmembers under combat conditions. Prepared for the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Department of the Navy, Washington, D.C., June 1973.

Every, M.G., & Parker, J.F., Jr. Aircraft escape and survival experiences of Navy prisoners of war. Prepared for the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Department of the Navy, Washington, D.C., August 1974.

The present phase of the program is a combining of *event* data, obtained by BioTechnology in earlier phases, with detailed *medical* data, obtained during extensive examinations of prisoners of war conducted at the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute. The results should provide a definitive picture of the biomedical problems encountered by Navy

prisoners of war subsequent to aircraft escape in combat. At this time, all data for the final phase have been collected, analyzed, and placed in computer format. Preliminary analyses of the data have been completed and a final technical report is scheduled for August 1975.

The specific purposes of this conference were twofold. First, the meeting allowed a preliminary review of the program status by sponsor personnel and by representatives of Navy facilities likely to utilize the results of the program. Second, attendees were invited to offer recommendations for additional analyses feasible for inclusion in the final computer run. The objective here was to maximize the ultimate utility of the results.

-Welcoming-Remarks

Captain Frank H. Austin, Jr., MC, USN
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Captain Austin next welcomed conference attendees on behalf of Navy sponsoring personnel. He described the background of the program briefly and dwelt for a moment on some ancillary benefits. For example, a recent request was received by Captain Austin from RADM J.S. Christiansen, Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare), for an accurate assessment of the extent to which naval aviators downed in combat are subsequently returned to combat status. The basis for this request was a belief by certain DOD analysts that the number of combat aviators is overprogrammed since most of them are recovered and subsequently returned to combat. This belief led to their position that the Navy's need is for a greater number of airplanes and for fewer pilots. Admiral Christiansen questioned this position and requested backup information for his counterargument.

Using statistics compiled under the Navy/BioTechnology program, Captain Austin was able to respond immediately to this request. The data showed that during Vietnam operations 396 Navy aircraft were downed, with a loss of 502 aviators. Of these downed aviators, 39 percent were recovered over the seven-year period from 1964 to 1971. Of the recovered aviators, only 70 percent were returned to flying status with less than a two-week period of grounding. During the year of heaviest losses (1967), only 23 percent of those aviators who escaped from an aircraft were able to return to flying duties within two weeks of the mishap. Admiral Christiansen was pleased both to be able to obtain definitive data in support of what he knew to be the case and to obtain it in short order. Captain Austin in turn was pleased that the information from this program could be used in direct support of operational planning issues.

Status Report on Study of Escape and Survival Problems
of Navy Prisoner of War Aircrewmen

Martin G. Every
BioTechnology, Inc.

(Materials presented from this point on represent a more or less direct transcript of the conference in which Mr. Every describes the principal findings of the project to date. Conference members were invited to ask questions at the completion of the description of each of the primary analyses rather than holding all questions and comments until the end of Mr. Every's presentation. For the most part, comments of conference members have been edited and shortened for purposes of the printed version of the conference.)

Mr. Every. In the first part of this presentation, I would like to describe the conditions which prevail in a Navy combat escape event. Table 1 shows that the ratio of aircraft types in the prisoner of war population is similar to the ratio found and analyzed in the earlier study of recovered aviators. One minor difference is that there were more two-seater aircraft (F-4, A-6, and RA-5C) in the prisoner of war group. The prisoner of war group included 80 pilots, 26 BN's, RAN's or RIO's, all of whom exited the aircraft utilizing the ejection seat. The major difference between these two groups during the initial phase of the mishap was the greater degree of structural damage to the aircraft of the POW group. This severe damage allowed POW aircrewmen much less time to slow the aircraft before initiating ejection, as shown in Table 2. The severity of this initial aircraft damage resulted in approximately a 100 percent increase in preejection injuries among the POW group over the recovered group.

Next, I would like to show the nonfatal injury rate for both the recovered and POW groups (Table 3). The percentages of POW injuries are compared with Navy operational data and with Air Force ejection statistics. To date, we still

have not been able to get an exact ratio for Air Force recovered crewmen. These are the latest figures that were obtained from the Air Force Directorate of Aerospace Safety.

Table 1
Aircraft Type Composing Combat Study Groups

TYPE	RECOVERED AIRCREW MEN (NO.)	PRISONER OF WAR (NO.)
A-4	43	40
F-4	25	27
F-8	16	11
A-6	8	12
A-7	8	6
RA-5C	4	10
Total	104	106

Table 2
Mean Times From Aircraft Damage Until Ejection

TYPE	RECOVERED AIRCREW MEN MEAN TIME (Min)	PRISONER OF WAR MEAN TIME (Min)
A-4	10.3	1.0
A-6	13.8	.5
A-7	2.4	1.0
F-4	18.6	1.6
F-8	10.8	.5
RA-5C	2.1	.2

Table 3
Nonfatal Injury Comparison

	MAJOR	MINOR	NONE
NAVY POW COMBAT	52%	25%	23%
NAVY RECOVERED COMBAT	29%	43%	28%
NAVY OPERATIONAL	19%	37%	44%
AIR FORCE RECOVERED COMBAT	15-25%	-	-
AIR FORCE POW COMBAT	38%	42%	20%

Mr. Bizup. How do you differentiate between major and minor injuries?

Mr. Every. As defined in OpNav Instruction 3750.6G, a major injury is usually a fracture, dislocation-type injury, or any third degree burn.

Mrs. Rice. It is also classified by length of stay in the hospital. A stay of five days or more is automatically called a "major" injury. This method of definition leaves a little to be desired and Captain Reed has asked me to examine this system, especially the minor classification and when a minor injury becomes a major injury.

Captain Ireland. It seems to be a socio-economic definition.

Captain Austin. This system was designed to increase the number of MORs that we receive by making it easier to use. It also is based on a tri-service standardized agreement.

Mr. Every. We did try to follow the guidelines presented in the OpNav Instruction Manual. Dr. Mitchell's assistance was invaluable in coding borderline cases.

Captain Austin. Are all of these Navy men who were shot down over North Vietnam? Were some over South Vietnam? How about the Air Force figures; were they over the North or South?

Mr. Every. All Navy were over North Vietnam. I assume most of the Air Force men also went down in the North.

Captain Mauldin. Out of 1,000 combat missions, the recovered figures from the Air Force showed most were downed over Laos and South Vietnam. We can see the ratio now swings the other way.

Mrs. Rice. I'd like to explain the high figure of 44 percent "no injury" seen in the operational category of Table 3. Around 1971, we decided to stop counting minimal injuries as "minor." Prior to this, a riser burn or similar injury was classified as minor. And any of you who are familiar with our Airborne Escape Summaries will see the graph, which shows the lines for minor injury classifications, such as riser burns, suddenly go down. Minimal injuries at that point were called "none." That is why you see such a high percentage of no injury; there are a lot of minimals caught in there. I just finished research for a paper I am presenting next month at the Aerospace Medical Association Convention on these injuries. I found that over a six-year period, we had 420 injuries that were counted as "none." Actually, 120 of them we quoted injuries on; we called them "minimal." We should add a severity code to the definition.

Mr. Every. This next figure will explain a lot of these injuries (Figure 1). This graph compares combat ejection speed with noncombat ejection speed. It is obvious that the curves represent very dissimilar events, especially at higher speed values. Sixty-one percent of the prisoners of war ejected at speeds greater than 400 knots, while only five percent of the operational, noncombat pilots ejected at speeds that high. Eight percent of the prisoner of war group ejected at speeds in excess of 600 knots.

The high ejection speeds and resultant Q forces encountered by POWs during ejection were the primary reason that 70 percent of the injuries were incurred during the ejection phase of the escape (Table 4). Of these injuries, 31 percent were minor and 69 percent were major. The probable causes of all

escape injuries are shown next in Table 5. The enemy-inflicted and fire injuries were predominantly "in the cockpit," or prejection injuries. However, there were four individuals who received major gunshot wounds during parachute descent.

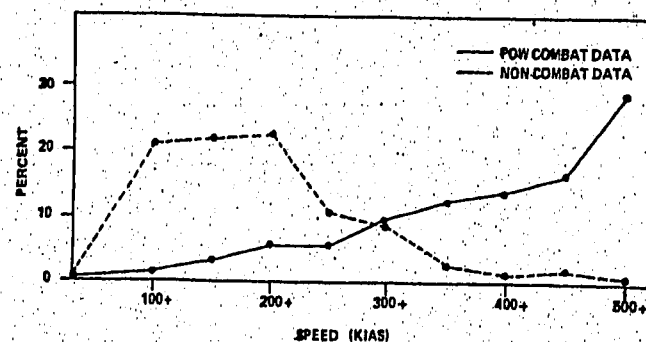


Figure 1. Aircraft speed at time of ejection.

Table 4
Injuries Incurred by Phase of Mishap

PHASE	PERCENT
PRE-EJECTION	18
DURING EJECTION	70
DURING DESCENT	3
DURING LANDING	9
DURING SURVIVAL	1

Table 5
Probable Cause of Injuries

	PERCENT
ENEMY INFLICTED	17
FIRE	10
EJECTION SEAT G FORCES	14
STRUCK OBJECT	12
FLAIL	33
LOSS OF EQUIPMENT	1
PARACHUTE OPENING SHOCK	2
PARACHUTE LANDING	11

Captain Austin. Does the enemy-inflicted include injuries received during capture?

Mr. Every. No, we did not include capture injuries here.

Captain Austin. I think when you redo this figure, you should say enemy-inflicted prior to capture. That answers a question that was raised at an Aerospace Medical meeting. I couldn't answer it specifically, but you did. In general terms, flailing is the major injury cause.

Mr. Every. Ejection seat forces, struck object, and flail are predominantly ejection injuries, and the ones which produced the most serious injuries.

Captain Ireland. There has been a lot of money spent on aerodynamic analysis of flail, spoilers, and other devices.

Captain Austin. Of course, you know that in the RA-5C community an anti-armflail device is available. The main difficulty is that no one wears it.

Mr. Every. One point we didn't anticipate was that there was an 11 percent injury rate on parachute landings. Many of these are fractures, dislocations, and severe sprains.

Captain Austin. I think that's a good argument for the steerable parachute and the training that goes with it.

Mr. Guill. Were you able to check on the gear an aviator might have been carrying beyond the regular survival equipment issued?

Mr. Every. That was not on the questionnaire although some aviators did list it. They listed items which they felt should or should not be carried for their specific survival circumstances under the Recommendations Section.

Captain Austin. What is the nominal parachute rate of descent, if he lands the correct way?

Mr. Guill. We try to keep it, in low wind conditions, under 30 feet per second total velocity and 24 feet vertical.

Captain Austin. Our injuries in operational parachute landings are way down aren't they? Thirty-five percent?

Mrs. Rice. There were only two injuries last year. Also, Mr. Every, did you include minor contusions and bruises from, for example, landing in a thistle patch in your parachute landing accidents?

Mr. Every. Yes, some, depending on the severity. These were predominantly minor strains and sprains.

LCDR Dickerson. You might cross the 11 parachute landing injuries with what contributed to capture in those 11 cases. If the enemy were on them in three seconds, that's one thing. If their injury impeded progress during escape, that's another.

Mr. Every. One can certainly presume that these injuries did impede escape and evasion in many of these cases.

Captain Hoskovec. The 11 percent figure with regard to parachute landing injuries makes me curious as to whether ejection occurred at high speed and low altitude. That may account for that landing percentage. In low altitude and high speed ejections, the man does not have time to prepare for landing.

Mr. Every. I think another factor is the frequency of injuries early in the mishap, such as 16 percent unconscious. This would affect landing injuries.

Captain Austin. This has always bothered me; we always use KIAS but we have not listed this versus altitude. It must be worth the time to show the relationship between indicated ejection speed and altitude in one chart. This would allow true air speed to be calculated which would be valuable information for designers of parachutes and other personal protective equipment.

Mr. Every. Our data showed about ten percent below 500 feet ejections for the POWs and about three percent with the recovered group.

In Figure 2, shown next, the percent of prisoner of war survivors sustaining major ejection injuries by ejection speed is indicated. In the upper speed ranges, the injuries were, of course, typically more severe and consisted of multiple major injuries. The primary causes of these major injuries were: 15 percent due to G forces, 8 percent striking equipment, 60 percent due to flail, and about 17 percent are unknown or are due to some minor cause. Many men were unconscious and could not say the exact cause of their injury.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of increase in flail injury with increase in ejection speed in the prisoner of war group. Again, the 300- and 400-knot range seems to be the point where the curve really starts to rise.

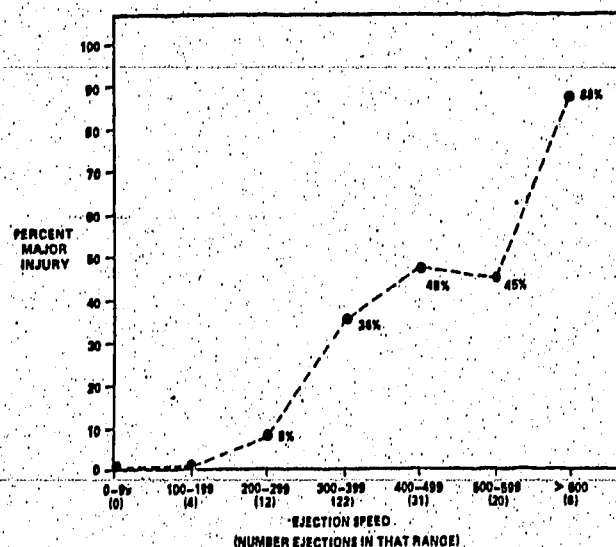


Figure 2. Percent of survivors sustaining a major injury v/s ejection speed.

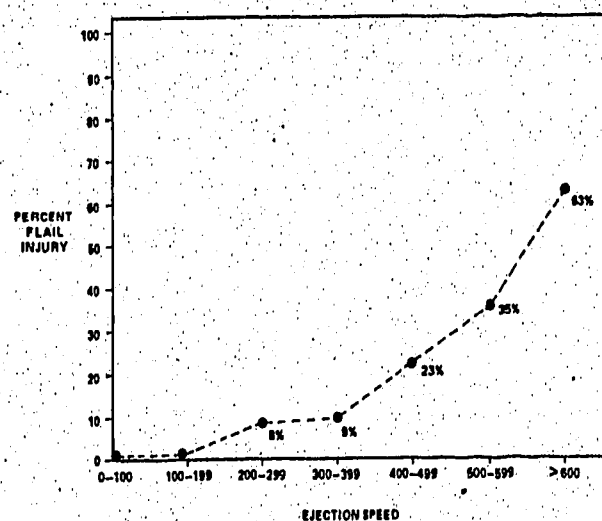


Figure 3. Incidence of major flail injury v/s ejection speed.

Table 6 separates flail injury by aircraft type. While the RA-5C does have the highest injury rate, it also has the highest mean ejection speed. I guess somewhat unexpected was the high injury rate for the A-4 and the higher rate for the A-7, both well below the mean ejection speed and both using the Douglas seat. The A-4 and the RA-5C were the only aircraft to have over a 50 percent multiple major flail injury rate.

Mr. Guill. Have you been able to differentiate the types of seats involved? When you say "A-4," there are five modifications of seats, and 11 with the A-7. I would be interested in seeing those numbers.

Mr. Every. I requested ejection seat modification data on those POW aircraft having Martin-Baker seats. Unfortunately, what I received was incomplete, since the records only go back to 1968 for the F-4 and to 1971 for the A-6.

Mr. Guill. If you can help us get that information, it will help us comprehend what has happened as things have changed. We have got some major changes hidden in the A-4 and A-7 data.

Mr. Every. Figure 4 shows the location of the major flail injuries. Sixty-two percent of the major injuries occurred in the upper extremities, which included the shoulders and arms, and the lower extremities made up about 32 percent.

Captain Hoskovec. Do you know how many of these cases used primary or secondary ejection methods as compared to their injuries?

Mr. Every. We plan to run that comparison this week.

Table 6
Percent of Survivors Sustaining Major
Flail Injury by Aircraft Type

AIRCRAFT TYPE	MEAN EJECTION SPEED (KIAS)	TYPE EJECTION SEAT	PERCENT OF EJECTEES SUSTAINING A MAJOR FLAIL INJURY
A-4	378	D	35
A-6	408	M-B	8
A-7	337	D	16
F-4	403	M-B	11
F-8	420	M-B	0
RA-5C	588	N.A.	50

D = DOUGLAS ESCAPAC SEAT
M-B = MARTIN BAKER SEAT
N.A. = NORTH AMERICAN SEAT

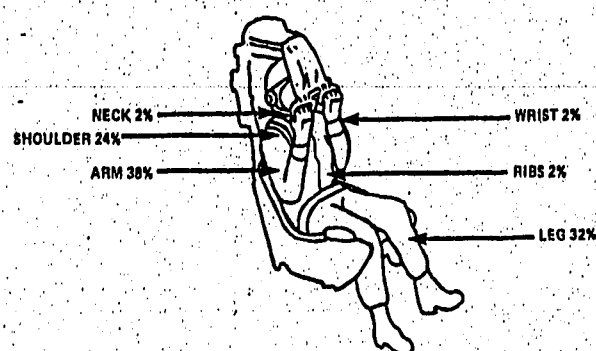


Figure 4. Location of major flail injuries.

Captain Austin. If you had a broken wrist or a broken shoulder, what are the odds that you had both arms injured? It is assumed, in the development of our equipment, that if a person breaks one wrist or dislocates one shoulder, he can work satisfactorily with the other hand. I'd like to find out if usually both sides are affected. Preejection injury is random and whether a missile or fire gets in the cockpit, it's a matter that you cannot control. It might affect the design of our equipment if we found out that 90 percent of the time when a man breaks one arm, he also breaks the other one. Then we'd have to design a device that could be operated by the foot.

Mrs. Rice. In operational ejection flail injuries, we find few cases where both arms have been injured.

Captain Hoskovec. This is what is bothering me about this meeting. We are looking at a very deliberate sample and I think it is great to know about it. But it seems to me that there could be more reliability of data if we looked at a larger sampling and gained new information based on all aircraft accidents. If we are, in fact, going to design equipment to prevent these kinds of injuries, we don't want to look at a sampling of 106 persons, we need to look at a sampling of many more incidents.

Mr. Every. We are dealing with combat data as a unique situation. When the POW sample is combined with the recovered, we get 210 cases representing a high speed, high stress event.

Captain Austin. This is a matter of establishing design requirements. For eight, ten, or 15 years, when we did not have any combat of significance, we could settle for these designs, because we only had perhaps five men a year with flail injuries. But in combat, you see percentages like those in today's briefing. In retrospect, I think we should have been designing for combat.

Captain Hoskovec. The main issue is one of speed. In normal operations, there is time to slow the aircraft so ejection speed is lower. I think if you took normal operational ejections over 400 knots, injuries probably would closely parallel those of combat (other than being shot while you're in the parachute). So, I am saying that if this is not a unique sampling in some respect, the injuries we are getting are entirely related to the environment.

Captain Austin. That is agreed, but the main thing we want to do here is to break this idea that you can live with the low number of injuries you have for normal operations. This is only one part of the picture.

Mr. Guill. Consistently since I have been with NavAir, there has been an attempt by our office to focus attention on the high speed flight regime. Just as consistently, there has been a refusal anywhere outside our office to consider the high speed regime as important. Specifically, we are told it is not our job to design for high speed. They give us a device that will handle the bulk of our operational ejections, but conditions are different in combat. Until now, we have not had this combat data to back us up, so we could not design for it.

LCDR Dickerson. I would just like to note that one of our goals at the beginning of this study was not only to show what did happen in combat, but also to show what could be gleaned if you could get a proper combat accident report, even though this might present some difficulties during combat operations.

Captain Austin. I recommended earlier to Captain Mauldin that we support efforts of the Safety Center to get combat data such as this in any future operations, even if only in skeleton form.

Captain Hoskovec. I would like to say one thing before we proceed. I am in an OpNav position to support the various types of budgeting for escape and survival. In this position, we go through continuous budget drills, one of which is going on now. When the Navy takes a significant cut for FY 77 planning, there are certain things that are looked at as not really combat essential equipment. For example, we have an ejection seat, why do we need a better one? We have an oxygen mask, do we need a better one? At the same time, we need money to build missiles, F-14s, and other advanced systems. Where do

you suppose the money is going to go? It will not go to escape and protective systems unless we can establish some kind of a policy; and it must be done at a high level; to fence safety and survival equipment so they cannot be touched during budget tradeoffs.

Captain Austin. It is cost effective and humanitarian if we rescue more of the men than we did. If we rescue more aviators, we can put them back into another weapons system and save money. Captain Hoskovec has a good point.

Mr. Every. I would like to return for a moment to the issue of flail injuries. It does appear that leg restraints are a definite help. In aircraft with the Douglas seat without leg restraints, there was a 20 percent major injury lower extremity flail rate, whereas in aircraft with Martin-Baker seats there was only a four percent lower extremity flail rate. The RA-5C North American seats had no lower leg flail. However, the RA-5C did have a 40 percent upper extremity injury rate.

Table 7 shows spinal compression fractures occurring during ejection by aircraft type. The A-4 and A-7 aircraft had the higher percentages. The mean speed for this injury group was 449 knots, which is approximately 41 knots faster than the overall group. Five out of seven multiple spinal major compression fractures involved aircraft with Douglas seats.

Captain Mauldin. Do the records in this study indicate how many men thought they were properly positioned for ejection and did not have a negative G or zero-G situation?

Mr. Every. We have the body position, including head, hips, feet, and elbows, that survivors thought they were in during the ejection sequence. Surprisingly, the majority of POWs said they were in good position.

Table 7
Survivors Sustaining Spinal
Compression Fractures During Ejection

AIRCRAFT TYPE	NUMBER OF EJECTIONS	SPINAL COMPRESSION FRACTURES	
		PERCENT MAJOR OR MINOR	PERCENT MAJOR
A-4	40	15	13
A-6	12	17	8
A-7	6	17	17
F-4	27	11	4
F-8	11	9	0
RA-5C	10	30	10

Captain Ireland. Were there any seat-man collisions?

Mr. Every. There were several in the recovered group but none in the POW group.

Mrs. Rice. What surprises me is the low percentage of F-4 major injuries, because that was before the H-7 rocket seat. The vertebral fracture rate went down when the new model was utilized.

Captain Austin. It would be helpful to identify these seats and find out which ones had the rocket.

Mr. Every. Unfortunately, we are having difficulty in doing that. I contacted the 3M offices in Mechanicsburg and they sent me the information starting in 1969, but I need the 1968 and before figures.

While we did not have a specific questionnaire item relating to helmet loss, 16 of the aircrewmembers reported losing their helmet during some phase of the ejection process (Figure 5). This loss occurred at a mean speed of 450 knots, or 42 knots faster than the mean ejection speed. We have not as yet looked at the

injury patterns for those who lost helmets versus those who didn't for all 106 POWs, but it does appear that head injuries were more significant and more extensive for those who lost their helmets.

- AIRCREWMEN LOSING HELMET DURING AIRCRAFT EGRESS - 16
- AIRCREWMEN REMOVING HELMET DURING PARACHUTE DESCENT - 3

Figure 5. Post ejection helmet loss statistics.

Mrs. Rice. These figures for combat helmet loss are about double the operational rate.

Mr. Every. All 16 men recorded, I might also note, that their helmet straps were securely fastened prior to ejection.

Mr. Guill. Can you investigate anything that might sound like bruises; or that survivors recalled having suffered pain in the side of the neck, etc.? We have some information that shows that some of these helmet losses might be induced by parachute opening, where the chute risers were involved.

Mr. Every. I'd have to look at the specific injury data. I'm sure there are a number of this type of injury.

Captain Austin. You might have cases of a bruise on one side where the riser hit and a helmet injury on the other side.

Mr. Every. Three of the 16 reported removing their helmets during parachute descent and in all three cases it was to operate the survival radio because they felt capture was imminent.

Table 8 shows the types and frequencies of major injuries incurred by POWs prior to capture. Another injury, not shown in this table because it is of a different character, which should be mentioned, is that 16 percent of the survivors reported being dazed or unconscious during the egress phase of the event. This is particularly relevant in over-water descents when it is necessary to inflate the life preserver or administer emergency first aid immediately after parachute descent.

Table 8
Frequency of Major Escape Injuries
(106 Cases)

MAJOR INJURY	NUMBER OF TIMES OCCURRING
AMPUTATION OF THUMB	1
BURNS	6
CONTUSIONS (SEVERE)	3
DISLOCATIONS	22
SIMPLE FRACTURES	32
COMPOUND FRACTURES	9
SPINAL COMPRESSION FRACTURES	16
SEVERE SPRAINS	6
TORN MUSCLE OR LIGAMENT	9
GUNSHOT WOUND	8
SEVERE LACERATIONS	3

Captain Hoskovec. Did those lacerations shown in this table occur by going through the canopy?

Mr. Every. Yes, in the A-6.

Mrs. Rice. Was this phenomenon just in the A-6 or in all types? This should be clarified since a peculiar configuration in the A-6 may account for a number of lacerations and major injuries. The plexiglass in this aircraft does not break off clean from the center canopy beam. Some persons are advocating not going

through the canopy in any aircraft and quote the A-6 data, not recognizing the fact that the A-6 has a peculiar configuration.

Mr. Every. This listing in Table 8 is similar, at least in type of injuries, to the recovered group. This testifies to the need for a relatively complete medical support kit aboard every rescue vehicle as well as personnel aboard the vehicle who are competent to give adequate emergency first aid to these types of injuries.

The seriousness of escape injuries are compounded in a number of ways under combat conditions (Figure 6). The first, of course, is the possible loss of an aircrewman either through death or permanent disability. Second, any major injury will always impede escape and evasion, especially under the conditions found in North Vietnam. In many instances, upper extremity injuries made it very difficult for survivors to inflate life vests, work survival radios, and use visual signaling equipment effectively. Any injured survivor in enemy territory greatly increases the hazard for SAR aircraft crews by subjecting these crews to increased hostile fire during the search and the time it takes to bring a man aboard safely. For the POW group, the injury data takes on increased significance because when the injury is coupled with the ordeal of prison such as found in Southeast Asia, the result may mean months of agonizing pain or even death.

- LOSS OF AIRCREWMAN
- DIFFICULTY IN ESCAPE AND EVASION
- PROBLEMS WITH SURVIVAL AND SIGNALING EQUIPMENT
- JEOPARDIZE SAR CRAFT AND CREWS
- EFFECTS DURING CAPTURE AND IMPRISONMENT

Figure 6. Effects of injury on survival and rescue.

Relatively few of the prisoner of war group had any real chance for escape and evasion, quite possibly because of injuries received during ejection. Sixty-six

percent were captured within the first ten minutes and almost 90 percent within the first half-hour (Figure 7).

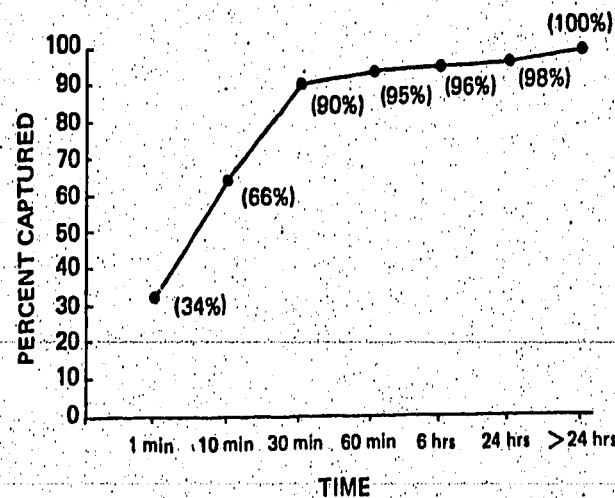


Figure 7. Time to capture for Navy prisoner of war group.

Mr. Guill. Assuming we changed the escape system in some manner that would preclude the touching of ground for a period of time, how many of these people would have been capable of sustained airborne time without loss of life; and how many of performing some operation to guide this sustained airborne capacity?

Mr. Every. Preejection injuries, as a general statement, were not that severe. Generally, that was not a high major injury phase. So what you do is eliminate some of the ejection injury phase.

Mr. Guill. My idea is that it would be useful to have a flyby capability rather than having to slow an aircraft down and then landing to pick up a man in hostile territory. Using a flyby, it would be possible to rescue him in mid-air. The rescue would be in some type of flyaway that might be powered by a balloon.

Captain Austin. If these men could stay airborne for 30 minutes, and also if they had been able to transit from where they were by 50 miles, probably less men would have been lost. Empirically, I think probably 100 percent of the POWs could have been saved.

Mrs. Rice. Is there something that could be done, perhaps by someone in this room, so that if we get into a combat situation again, we will not have to wait ten years to get reports of what happened? It is understandable for the POW group. In 1964, we raised the requirement for an aircraft accident report and a Medical Officer's Report for persons being recovered at that time, but we did not get the reports until the conflict was over.

Captain Austin. At the end of the war, weren't we getting reports of combat injury at the Safety Center?

Mrs. Rice. They were mostly debriefings. A preliminary message was required. Debriefing personnel were told what to put in that message, but if they didn't, we never followed it up. We received nothing except the man's name and the fact that he had ejected.

Captain Mauldin. A lot of that probably stems from the fact that combat is a busy scene and there usually is not time to compile data in that environment. Possibly later on, after the crew's report, it might be gathered and sent out.

Mrs. Rice. The report that BioTechnology sent out last year presented information on events that happened ten years ago. Our aircraft have changed, our equipment has changed, and I think it would have been more effective if we could have obtained this information while the men were still over there.

Mr. Every. There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from our analyses of the combat experiences of both POW and recovered aircrewmembers (Figure 8). One broad conclusion is that combat escape is unique from operational escape in a number of ways. The severity of damage to the aircraft in combat was responsible for more pre-ejection injuries, unconsciousness, and allowed less time to prepare for ejection. Ejections occur at higher speeds and, of course, survivors come down in enemy territory. These conditions result in increased injury severity early in the mishap, with the consequences that many injuries are compounded in the later phases, such as during parachute landing. The highest number of major injuries occurred during the ejection phase of the mishap, which raises the question: Should we overdesign ejection systems and personal protective equipment to meet the stresses which are found only in the combat mishap? These injuries and their severity played key roles in limiting the ability of survivors to escape and evade, operate life support equipment and signaling equipment, and also greatly hindered the efficiency of and increased the hazard to SAR craft.

- COMBAT ESCAPE IS UNIQUE
- INCREASED INJURY SEVERITY
- MOST INJURIES DUE TO EJECTION/FLAIL
- INJURY IMPORTANCE TO ESCAPE AND SAR

Figure 8. Conclusions of report.

Captain Ireland. Can we further conclude that we have definite evidence here that some of the protective equipment was a significant factor in determining the outcome of the aircraft escape?

Captain Austin. I think it is more a question of, "Have we underdesigned all of the equipment?"

Mr. Gull. Most definitely. Four hundred and fifty knots is considered the top design speed for most equipment.

Mr. Fedrizzi. I think what we have done is design each protective item for each individual hazard. Then, when we put it all on the man, we encumber him by overequipping him. I think we should use dual function, mission-oriented equipment, and thus put minimum equipment on the man.

Captain Austin. I think we all are in agreement that the combat situation presents very difficult problems for the designers of aircraft escape systems and of aviators' personal protective equipment. I hope that the efforts of the members of this conference, drawing on the statistics and analyses provided by BioTechnology today, will be able to stimulate efforts toward ever-improved systems in the future. Navy aircrewmembers represent too great an investment to be given anything less than the best protection possible.

I now declare this conference adjourned.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A fourth report prepared by BioTechnology, Inc., entitled "Biomedical Aspects of Aircraft Escape and Survival Under Combat Conditions", will appear in "Part III—Americans Missing in Southeast Asia". This final report will incorporate the studies of 1973, 1974, and 1975 into the MIA and KIA data to elucidate those events and conditions which had a direct or indirect effect in producing major injury or death during the aircraft escape sequence. Special emphasis will be focused on those fatal to nonfatal transition areas that appear critical in determining what constitutes a survivable ejection.)

**REPORTS PRESENTED BY LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION, NORTON AIR
FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA**

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following reports entitled "Ejection Injuries in Southeast Asia Prisoners of War Returnees"; "Use of Life Support Equipment by Aircrews Captured in Southeast Asia"; Southeast Asia Escape, Evasion, and Recovery Experience—January 1, 1963–December 31, 1971"; and "In-Flight Escape Experiences of Southeast Asia Prisoners of War Returnees", prepared by Life Sciences Division, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Norton Air Force Base, California. A forth and final report will appear in "Part III—Americans Missing in Southeast Asia.")

(253)

SOUTHEAST ASIA ESCAPE, EVASION, AND RECOVERY EXPERIENCE

1 JAN 1963 - 31 DEC 1971

INTRODUCTION

This study is based on reports of 648 USAF survivors recovered from combat mishaps in Southeast Asia (SEA) as of 31 Dec 1971. These reports included several sources: an earlier edition of AF Form 711gA, "Life Sciences Report of an Individual Involved in an AF Accident/Incident"; the current more detailed AF Form 711gA; the DIGIS Form 205, "Report of Use or Attempted Use of Ejection Seat"; and the PACAF Escape and Evasion Report. Also included were a limited number of rather sketchy reports from very early in the SEA conflict. These were sent to the Directorate of Aerospace Safety (DAS) by concerned life support officers in the combat area.

The USAF-Industry Life Support Conference, 28 Nov - 1 Dec 1967, addressed the need for the collection of life sciences data on combat mishaps. In 1968, as a result of the validation of this requirement, PACAF issued a Supplement to AFR 127-4 which required the submission of a 711gA on all combat mishaps involving the use of life support equipment. While this proved to be effective, it soon became apparent that an AF directive was necessary to insure continuous and timely reporting of this vital information. Therefore, in July 1970, AFR 127-9, "Life Sciences Investigation and Reporting of US Air Force Aircraft Combat Mishaps," was published.

In 1971 the PACAF Command Life Support Officer implemented a program to sanitize (declassify) all available evasion and recovery reports, and forward them to the DAS. This action greatly augmented information contained in the AF Forms 711gA and DIGIS Forms 205. It also provided the only source of information on reports not previously received, and supplied the link which allowed this study to begin.

Since no provision had been made to incorporate the information contained in all these reports into the computer system, a working group was convened at Norton AFB in November 1971 to conduct a hand analysis of the reports. A brief form was developed for this purpose. In May 1972, these data

were updated and revalidated to obtain a firm foundation for the preparation of this formal interim study of evasion and recovery experience in SEA. The initial review of these reports and the subsequent update and revalidation were, severely hampered by the lack of a standard format for escape and evasion (E&E) debriefings. This lack of standardization also resulted in the loss of valuable data.

It is the purpose of this study to evaluate (1) the performance of life support equipment and systems in the combat environment, (2) the effectiveness of the life support and E&E training programs, and (3) the effectiveness of rescue and recovery operations. The findings will make it possible for the many valuable lessons learned in these areas to be applied to current and future operations. A more critical in-depth analysis will be accomplished after the subject reports have been computerized.

This study includes only AF survivors. Excluded were Army, Navy, Marine, VNAF personnel recovered, and, with one exception, fatalities. The one exception was a crewman who was located and recovered, but fell to his death while being hoisted aboard the recovery helicopter.

GENERAL DATA

1. Type Mishap

The 648 evaders recovered during the period 1 Jan 1963 - 31 Dec 1971 were distributed by the type mishap, type and model of aircraft involved, and calendar year period (Section A, Atch 1). The 1963-1965 period was combined since only 26 cases were reported during this time. There were 76 in 1966 and 100 in 1967. The peak years were 1968 and 1969 when 159 and 135 cases respectively were reported. The total number of survivors reported began to drop off in 1970, with 85 cases, and finally 68 in 1971. This reduction was related to reduction in air activities during the latter two years.

Of the 648 evaders, 554 (85 percent) ejected or extracted from their aircraft in flight following damage by enemy action. Thirty-seven (6 percent) others effected conventional over-the-side bailout, four (0.6 percent) were blown or thrown from the aircraft in flight with a subsequent parachute descent, 50 (8 percent) were involved in crashes or crash landings, and in 3 (0.5 percent) cases, the type mishap was not specified. The aircraft most frequently involved was

the F-4, accounting for 275 or 42 percent of the total. The F-100 was next with 114 (18 percent), followed by the F-105 with 87 (14 percent). The remaining 122 involved 23 different aircraft models.

2. In-flight Egress Factors

In-flight egress problems in combat closely parallel those in peacetime flying. However, the greater incidence of high-speed ejections results in more Q-force associated problems. The really serious egress problems such as seat or parachute failure and disabling injuries barely show up at all, because these people are seldom recovered in a combat environment.

Of the 800 problems reported by these 648 evaders (section B, Atch 1), by far the most prevalent was loss of equipment. As might be expected, the most commonly lost item was the helmet. About 15 percent of the survivors lost their head protection during the egress sequence. (This is roughly comparable to the noncombat statistics, where experience has shown that about 18 percent lose their helmets when they eject with unstabilized seats and about 8 percent in the semistable seats.) Most helmets lost in either regime rotated forward and off the head. Several survivors in the study actually caught their helmets after they came off and redonned them.

Severe oscillations after parachute deployment were reported in 5 percent of the escapes. Some of these were induced by survival kit deployment. All severe oscillations stopped whenever the four-line cut or release was used.

Of crew members reporting, approximately one-half indicated whether or not the survival kit was deployed. Of these, 190 (52 percent) deployed their kits; 125 (34 percent) did not. Thirty-three (9 percent) either were unable to deploy their kit, or it failed to deploy when activated. Six individuals (1.7 percent) didn't have their kits hooked up. These were primarily A-1 pilots. In 12 cases (3.3 percent) the kit was jettisoned, usually to prevent hang-up in trees.

The four-line cut or release was effective for steering the chute away from the enemy as well as providing a stable descent. Steering was limited with those parachutes incorporating cross-connector straps because of the limited riser pull that is possible. Even so, the cut/jettison did help the evader pick his landing site, or stay close to his buddy during descent.

One individual reported that one of his canopy releases opened during ejection or chute deployment. The cross-connector strap undoubtedly saved his life. It is also probable--and ironic--that the very fact the release failed saved his life. When the release opened, that riser moved up as far as the cross-connector strap would allow, resulting in a considerable side-slip during descent. Probably resulting from his sloping descent, he landed on one side of a river, and the front seater, who ejected with him, landed on the other. He was subsequently recovered, but the front seater landed in the middle of an enemy work camp and was not recovered.

3. Landing Environment

The immediate environment the survivor faced following his mishap was reported in all but three instances. This is a critical phase of the survival since the landing site is the single most important factor in determining subsequent actions to be taken by the survivor and search and rescue (SAR) forces. It is upon landing that the survivor's general attitude and mental conditioning for the uncertainties that lie ahead are developed.

Land environments were encountered by 519 (80 percent) of the total and water environments by 126 (20 percent) (Section C, Atch 1). Of the land environments, slightly over one-half (264) involved heavily wooded areas. In 122 (46 percent) of the 264 in wooded areas, the survivor became hung-up in trees, some as much as 200 feet above the ground. Of these, 30 remained, and recovery was effected from the trees, 20 used the personnel lowering device, 48 climbed down, 18 either fell or were blown from the trees by helicopter rotor wash, and six did not specify subsequent actions. Included in the above were 18 crew members who remained suspended in their chute harnesses in midair either by choice or due to inability to initially effect release. Some of these were "clotheslined" between two trees by the parachute and the deployed survival kit. The duration of suspension ranged from 5 minutes to 9 hours, with nine of the 18 survivors reporting extreme discomfort, loss of circulation, and loss of mobility of extremities. This could and did compromise subsequent evasion and recovery attempts, as demonstrated by one survivor who was hung upside down by his survival kit. After 35 minutes he loosened the leg straps of his chute and released the chest strap to free himself. As he was sliding down, his right ankle was caught, suspending him in this position for an

additional 45 minutes. He was unable to pull himself up or free his ankle. His vision became impaired, but he was able to use his survival radio to maintain contact with the rescue helicopter, and tell them of his plight. A rescue specialist released him, and he was taken aboard the helicopter. He regained partial sensation and mobility of his legs after six hours and full mobility after 24 hours.

In the remaining land environment cases, 137 were in open areas, 44 were in swamps/marshes/rice paddies, 34 in dense jungle vegetation, 21 on hillsides and slopes, 15 in rocks/karst and other ground obstructions. There were four "others." One included a survivor who ended up rather precariously on the edge of a cliff, 200 feet above the valley floor.

In spite of the stresses of a combat mishap in a foreign and extremely hostile environment, there was a humorous side. One pilot made his parachute landing fall (PLF) through the roof of a flimsy barn and landed on top of a cow that was being milked by a thoroughly surprised farmer.

The 126 water landings included 115 in open seas and 11 in inland bodies of water such as rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams. One pilot landed in a water-filled bomb crater. Ironically, the pilot almost drowned because his ejection seat had failed to release properly.

More than one-half of the open-sea landings were during the 1967-1968 time period when considerable air activity was concentrated above the 17th parallel.

4. Duration of Evasion

Most evaders in SEA were recovered in very short order. Many factors had a bearing on this, but probably the most important were friendly control of the air, an efficient dedicated rescue force, and aircrews who knew how to aid in their own rescues.

More than one-third of the evaders were picked up in less than 30 minutes (Section D, Atch 1). Over half were on their way home in one hour. Only 16 percent had to spend more than six hours on the ground, and that was usually because darkness terminated the rescue effort. Most of these were picked up at first light the following day.

The shortest evasion reported was 20 seconds. An Army helicopter followed the pilot during his parachute descent, landed beside him, and made the recovery. Contrasting with this was one episode of 72 hours early in the war. That one was more of a survival situation than an E&E, because the pilot was able to build fires, forage for food, cook, and make camp with no interference from the enemy. Other long evasions were one of 60 hours, one of 56, and the classic event referred to in the last paragraph of 2. In-flight Egress Factors, above, where the Weapons System Officer (WSO) spent 50½ hours completely surrounded by large numbers of enemy troops and AAA batteries.

5. Evasion Problems

Problems encountered during the evasion phase that could and did hamper the evasion of the survivor were reported in 178 instances (Section E, Atch 1). The presence of enemy forces in the immediate area was the largest single factor reported, accounting for 68 (38 percent) of the total. In several instances there were actual confrontations with hostiles; however, for the most part, this condition required the survivor to hastily depart the area and seek concealment, thus denying him the use of equipment not carried on his person. The next largest category that compromised evasion was injury or incapacitation. Most of the injuries were incurred either during egress from the aircraft in flight or during the parachute landing fall in the varied environs of SEA. The degree of injury in some cases was so severe that the survivor was unable to take any actions of his own. Recovery in these instances was fortuitous since he was completely at the mercy of the environment. There is no way of determining how many survivors were subsequently killed or taken captive as a result of injuries sustained. There is reason to believe the number is quite substantial.

Problems occasioned by the predominance of trees and heavily wooded areas were evidenced by the fact that 15 survivors reported difficulties exiting trees, 11 could not retrieve the aircraft survival kit from the trees, and eight stated they were severely hampered by dense underbrush. Wild life native to the area posed no significant threat to the survivor. Insects and leeches proved to be a nuisance factor in only eight cases.

The major problem associated with water environments was entanglement in the parachute suspension lines and other

equipment after landing. This was reported in 19 instances. Five survivors were dragged through the water by high winds because of inability to release the parachute canopy immediately, and four stated that heavy seas hampered the use of water survival gear. In spite of these adversities, the recovery rate in overwater survival situations was extremely high.

6. Equipment Used

Proper use of life support equipment was instrumental in most SEA rescues. The 648 individuals reported using 1,863 items of equipment (Section F, Atch 1). A survivor frequently used more than one piece of an item. For instance, he may have fired three or four MK-13 flares. Since the reports usually didn't indicate how many were used, each item listed in this section is one item reported by one man, irrespective of how many pieces of that item he may have used.

As expected, radios were used most frequently. Eighty percent of the evaders communicated with fellow crew members, rescue forces, or wingmen, using survival radios.

Various types of flares were reported used by 298 (46 percent) of the evaders. Among the flares reported, the MK-13 Mod O was most frequently used, accounting for 238 or 80 percent of the total. Evaders usually didn't differentiate between standard penguin flares and the foliage penetrating version in their reports. However, 60 (20 percent) individuals did use pen-style flares. One man used a smoke grenade from his crashed helicopter, when he forgot about his MK-13s in the heat of a rescue under fire.

Flotation equipment became extremely important, because most pilots, especially those that were hit over North Vietnam, tried to go "feet wet" and reach the relative safety of the South China Sea. Life preservers were used by 101 (16 percent) of the individuals reporting. Eighty-four (13 percent) survivors climbed into their life rafts.

Thirst was a common phenomenon among the survivors. Although only about one in four reported drinking water while awaiting rescue, the real figure is probably somewhat higher. Many reports were too incomplete to have mentioned a non-equipment item such as water. Some evaders stated that their throats were so dry that they had to take a drink before they could use the radio. Others mentioned that they were never very thirsty.

Although most evaders did very little traveling, the lensatic compass proved extremely valuable. It was reported as used by 97 individuals, usually to vector rescue forces to their positions. The compass was also very effectively used to direct air strikes against the enemy during pre-rescue "sanitizing" of the area around the survivors.

Personal weapons, usually the issue .38 Special revolver, were instrumental 28 times in the successful conclusion of the evasion/recovery attempt (see also Section H, Atch 1). The weapon was used for defense by 21 evaders. They didn't necessarily have to fire at the enemy. Frequently the mere act of showing or pointing the weapon, with intent, was enough to make the strangers go away. On the opposite extreme, one survivor, who was surrounded and pinpointed, burst from his cover firing and yelling. In his headlong charge, he killed at least two of the enemy and scattered the rest. He was picked up. Another crewman used his .38 to scare away an over-friendly water buffalo.

Knives played an important role in spite of the short-term survival situation. More than 10 percent of the evaders stated they needed and used various knives, predominantly the Navy 5-inch sheath knife or the MC-1.

7. Equipment Problems

Problems encountered during the previously cited 1,683 uses of life support equipment were reported in 220 cases (Section G, Atch 1). As with the use of equipment, each problem reported was considered. The major problem involved electronic locator devices. This category alone accounted for almost one-half of the total cases, which included 72 failures of survival radios. There were 20 failures of the personnel locator beacon and 11 survivors stated that they could not turn the beacon off when circumstances dictated this course of action. There were 21 reported failures of the MK-13 Mod O flare and seven failures of the penguin flare. In addition to these, the MK-13 proved to be inadequate in 23 cases, because the smoke clung to the ground too long and did not disperse through the foliage or the smoke dispersed too soon. In 10 cases during the 1963-1968 period, the penguin flare failed to penetrate the jungle canopy and was not seen.

Problems encountered with flotation equipment included nine failures of the life preserver and seven failures of the life raft during water-landing situations. Survival kit and survival vest components were inaccessible in 20 cases. In the case of the survival vest, design of pocket closures,

occasionally aggravated by unauthorized moisture-proof wrapping of some components, made it virtually impossible to extract the equipment from the pocket.

The 220 equipment usage problems included 141 actual equipment failures. Based on the 1,683 total items used, this represents an equipment failure rate of 8 percent. This may be considered an acceptable failure rate under some circumstances, but the SEA environment dictates nothing less than a 100-percent reliability.

8. Survivor Signalling Devices

The evaders were sometimes quite ingenious in calling attention to themselves on the ground (Section H, Atch 1). Usually, however, the radio was the prime factor in bringing the SAR forces to the survivor's general location. He then pinpointed himself with the radio or various visual signals. Three hundred sixty-three individuals (56 percent) used radios to get the rescue force over their position. Personnel locator beacons were used effectively by 23 survivors.

Among the visual locator devices used effectively, flares predominated. The MK-13 Mod O flare was effective in 180 cases (28 percent) and Penguin/Gyrojet flares in 31 cases (5 percent). In spite of the predominating jungle canopy, nearly 44 percent of the survivors reported they were seen on the surface by rescue personnel. In addition to the flares, evaders used several other devices to attract attention. The colored parachute canopy was effective 67 times. Other frequently used signals were the signal mirror, 16 times; strobe light in 11 instances; and such things as waved maps, cloth, life preservers in 11 cases. The aircraft wreckage also led rescue crews to 11 survivors.

Seven aircrews used tracers fired from their .38s to get the attention of SAR forces.

9. Recovery Means

As would be expected, recovery of the survivors was almost exclusively by helicopters (Section I, Atch 1). In those cases in which recovery vehicle was identified, 99 percent of the overland and 86 percent of the overwater recoveries were made by helicopters. Only seven survivors were picked up by ground parties overland, while 17 overwater were recovered by surface vessels. In 18 overland and three overwater cases the recovery means was not reported. The most unique recovery was that of a downed A-1 pilot by

another A-1 crewman who landed his aircraft in an enemy-infested area, took the survivor aboard, and took off in a hail of gunfire. For this extraordinarily heroic effort the rescuer was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. In overland helicopter pickups, the hoist was used in 300 cases. The forest penetrator was the rescue device used in 273 of these. Six rescue crews used ropes without a hoist and 20 cases were categorized as "other" or "unknown." Examples of "other" devices were a Webb belt, a rope ladder, and a nylon strap.

In the remaining 168 cases, the helicopter either landed or hovered just off the ground and took the survivor aboard. A distribution of the 300 hoist pickups included 273 jungle penetrators, 17 "horse collars," four Stokes litters/baskets, and six not specified.

Helicopters again predominated in overwater rescues. However, the most used rescue device was the sling or "horse collar," which accounted for 42 recoveries. The forest penetrator was used 19 times. Almost one-third of the helicopters making recoveries in the water environment either landed or hovered low enough for the survivor to be pulled aboard.

One man who parachuted into the water was initially rescued by a ground party. He landed in a canal, and was pulled onto the bank by local nationals.

10. Recovery Helicopter - Dedicated/Opportune Rescue

Ninety-three percent (600) of the evaders were recovered by helicopter (Sections K and J, Atch 1). Dedicated rescue vehicles made the pickup 431 times (72 percent), while 107 (18 percent) were made by helicopters which just happened to be in the area (opportune rescue). Fifty-three (9 percent) of the survivors didn't report whether they were picked up by dedicated or opportune rescue forces. It's obvious they didn't care.

HH-3s, HH-53s, and HH-43s predominated among the dedicated rescue vehicles. Sixty-one individuals failed to state which model of the dedicated "Jolly Greens" picked them up. Eight recoveries were made by rescue-dedicated HU-16s.

Army UH-1 Huey helicopters made the bulk of the opportune rescues. When they were in the area and could get to

the survivor, rescues were usually very fast. One spectacular opportune rescue was made by an A-1E. (See 9. Recovery Means, above.)

11. Rescue-Recovery Problems

There were 217 reported problems associated with the rescue and recovery phase of the survivors' ordeals. They were quite varied, being distributed among 19 different categories (Section L, Atch 1). The most frequently encountered problem was the need for assistance by the survivor from rescue aircraft personnel. These were, for the most part, due to injuries received during escape from the aircraft or on PLF. Included in this group, which accounted for 25 percent of the total, were several cases in which the pararescue jumper (PJ) arbitrarily deplaned to assist the survivor even though he may not have required help. The next largest problem was inadequate training on the part of the survivor. Of 38 reported cases in this category, six involved use of basic survival equipment, nine indicated a lack of knowledge of SAR procedures, and 23 were not familiar with use of the rescue device. There was a significant reduction in the reported incidence of inadequate training in the later years. For example, during 1963-1968 the proportion of survivors showing poor training procedures was 8 percent as compared to 3 percent for the 1969-1971 time period. This is undoubtedly related to an increased emphasis on specialized training.

In 32 cases hostile forces in the area hampered the recovery effort. The rescue helicopters were subjected to intense enemy ground fire, with several being shot down during the recovery effort. There was one reported case in which the hoist cable was shot completely in two. When hostiles were present, the area frequently had to be "sanitized" by rescue combat air patrol (RESCAP) aircraft before recovery could be effected.

Communications problems were reported in 23 instances, 13 of which involved communication between the survivor and rescue or RESCAP aircraft. These included such things as the use of different frequencies by aircraft of other services and interference due to transmissions by more than one survivor in the area. The other 10 cases indicated a need for some type of communication device on the penetrator. The dense jungle canopy and heavy vegetation in SEA often precluded visual reference between the survivor and rescue aircraft personnel. This resulted in the survivor's

being hoisted before he was completely secured to the penetrator, in some cases exposing him to an additional serious hazard. In 15 instances, the recovery helicopter was not equipped with a rescue device. These were usually Army helicopters that happened to be in the area.

Poor SAR force procedures were evident in nine recoveries. The most tragic of these was the single fatality included in this study. During an overwater recovery of a highly excited survivor, the PJ punctured one side of the survivor's LPU prior to placing him in the sling. As the survivor was about to enter the helicopter, he slipped from the sling back into the water and was not recovered. Poor procedures on the part of the survivor certainly contributed to this unfortunate incident.

12. Survivor Training

Life support and survival training really paid dividends in SEA. Many of the survivors made glowing comments about their training. Typical of these were, "Everything came naturally" or "It was all automatic." Little extended survival training was required or used in SEA, but, generally, survivors who had received procedural training at the Jungle Survival School (formerly PACAF JSS), or one of the water-oriented schools stressing procedures, performed extremely well.

Nearly 80 percent of the evaders had completed basic survival training, usually at Stead or Fairchild AFBs (Section M, Atch 1). When the PACAF Jungle Survival School was organized at Clark AB in 1965, more detailed training specifically tailored to SEA was offered, but early quotas were small. Training stressed the evader's part in the rescue. When the JSS achieved its maximum student output, nearly all SEA-assigned USAF crew members received the training. However, prior to that time, many flew in SEA without this training. Over the 9-year period, about 73 percent of the evaders studied had completed the Clark School. As the percentage of crew members who had attended this school increased, the percentage of training-related errors decreased. During the 1963-1967 period, 11 percent made such mistakes. By 1970-1971, this had been reduced to only 2 percent.

Over half of the survivors had completed one of the water-oriented, major command life support schools or the USAF Water Survival School at Homestead AFB.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded that:

1. The lack of a standardized format for E&E debriefings is resulting in the loss of valuable life support data.
2. Ninety-one percent of the E&E reports submitted on combat mishaps involved in-flight egress.
3. The most frequently encountered problem associated with in-flight egress is the loss of equipment, especially helmets.
4. In combat, there is a high incidence of high-speed ejections with associated Q-force problems.
5. Fifteen percent of the survivors reported losing their protective helmet.
6. The four-line cut/release procedure proved to be an effective means of dampening parachute oscillations, and providing a degree of parachute maneuverability during descent.
7. Reliability of the survival kit was compromised by a relatively high rate of failure of the deploying mechanism, or by inability of the crew member to activate the handle.
8. Approximately one-half of the survivors in land environments were exposed to heavily wooded areas.
9. Forty-six percent of the survivors landing in heavily wooded areas were suspended in trees by their parachutes or other equipment, thus compromising their subsequent evasion.
10. Most parachute water landings were made in open seas.
11. More than one-third of all survivors were recovered in less than 30 minutes.
12. Only 16 percent of the survivors spent more than six hours on the ground. This most frequently resulted from termination of the SAR effort due to darkness.

13. Presence of hostiles in the area, injury or incapacitation to the survivor, and entanglement with equipment in the water were the major problems encountered during the evasion phase.

14. The survival radio was the single most important item of equipment available to the survivor, and the most frequently used item.

15. The second most frequently used items of equipment were flares, most of which were the MK-13 Mod 0 types.

16. There was a frequent need for drinking water after the survivor became stabilized in the survival environment.

17. The lensatic compass was particularly valuable in vectoring rescue forces to the survivor and directing air strikes against the enemy in the area.

18. The personal weapon was frequently an effective deterrent to enemy forces, or indigenous personnel of questionable intent, who confronted the survivors.

19. The aircraft survival kit components were hardly ever used in the land environment.

20. Life support equipment failed to function properly in 141 (8 percent) instances and proved to be inadequate for the situation in 33 (2 percent) others.

21. Electronic locator devices were used by 60 percent of the survivors to pinpoint their locations for the SAR forces; 33 percent utilized flares.

22. Approximately 44 percent of the survivors were located visually by rescue personnel.

23. Ninety-nine percent of the survivors on land, and 86 percent of those in the water were recovered by helicopter.

24. The primary means of helicopter recovery was by use of the hoist.

25. Fifteen different types of helicopters were identified in the recovery of the downed crewmen--72 percent were on dedicated missions and 18 percent just happened to be in the area.

26. Twenty-five percent of the survivors who experienced problems during the rescue-recovery phase required assistance from rescue aircraft personnel, primarily due to injuries incurred during in-flight escape or on parachute landing fall.

27. Inadequate training on the part of the survivor and the presence of hostiles in the area compromised the recovery effort in 18 percent and 15 percent of the cases respectively.

28. The lack of some type of communication device on the jungle penetrator compromised survivor recovery in ten cases.

29. Poor SAR force procedures were indicated in only nine cases; however, one resulted in loss of the survivor.

30. Generally, the formal training received by the survivors was adequate for the situation; however, 10 percent of the survivors made mistakes that reflected on their training.

It is recommended that:

1. A standard format be developed for E&E debriefings.

2. There be a continuing program of protective helmet refinement to assure greater helmet retainability during in-flight egress.

3. The programs to install automatic deployment capability (selective) in all survival kits used in ejection-seat-equipped aircraft be expedited.

4. An improved SAR capability under conditions of darkness be developed.

5. SAR procedures and equipment be standardized among the services.

6. Search and rescue force procedures be reviewed to assure adherence to standard rescue procedures.

7. Consideration be given to the refinement and miniaturization of life support equipment so that all required items can be carried on the person.

8. A means of communication between the survivor and rescue aircraft personnel be developed for use during pickup by the jungle penetrator.

9. Original and refresher egress and survival training programs place specific emphasis on: (1) realistic and aggressive survival training under extreme conditions such as adverse weather, darkness, severe topography, and physical injury or incapacitation; (2) parachute landing techniques in unusual environments such as trees, rugged terrain, and bodies of water; (3) the advantages of the four-line release in dampening oscillation and providing for maneuverability; (4) search and rescue procedures; and (5) use of the jungle penetrator and other hoisting devices to include actual pickups.

10. A method be developed to provide for the release of the parachute cross-connector strap in conjunction with the four-line release to provide for greater parachute maneuverability.

11. A day-night type flare be developed that: (1) can be easily activated with one hand, and (2) will assure greater penetration of heavy foliage.

12. Electronic locator devices continue to be refined and miniaturized to achieve a 100-percent reliability.

13. The availability of timed batteries for personnel locator beacons (PLB) be expedited to assure that the PLB action can be positively terminated.

14. Method of packaging items in the survival vest be investigated to guarantee rapid and easy removal of necessary items under adverse conditions.

15. The contents of this report be disseminated to all USAF aircrew members.

1 Atch
SEA Experience Statistics

IN-FLIGHT ESCAPE EXPERIENCES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA PRISONER OF WAR RETURNEES

During the Tenth Annual Symposium of the Survival and Flight Equipment (SAFE) Association, 2-5 Oct 1972, a special papers session addressed combat escape, evasion, and recovery of United States Air Force (USAF) personnel in Southeast Asia (SEA). Specific subjects included escape and evasion problems, use of survival equipment, rescue and recovery of downed crewmen, and the role of life support training and training equipment.

These papers were based on 648 USAF crew members who were successfully recovered following combat mishaps. They provided the all-important data base to cognizant Department of Defense (DOD) agencies and involved industry concerning the performance of life support equipment/systems in a combat environment. In spite of this extremely valuable and heretofore unavailable data source, there existed a serious information gap--that of the returned prisoner of war (POW). What were the conditions that resulted in his capture while his fellow crew member was able to evade and subsequently be recovered? Were the conditions of shootdown different so as to preclude his ability to evade? Did injuries received during his experience compromise his capability to evade and be picked up? Was his survival equipment adequate for the situation? Was he properly trained? These are but a

few of the questions that have been raised over the years concerning our POWs. There have been many discussions and some rather serious allegations concerning the availability, use, and function of life support equipment; however, there has been no documentation to either corroborate or refute publicized problem areas.

A program recently initiated by the Air Force Inspection and Safety Center in conjunction with HQ USAF and a group of POW returnees attending the Air War College, and headed by Col Joe Kittinger, has resulted in an extremely valuable life support data bank on 218 returned POWs. At the time this paper was being prepared, 209 of the 218 questionnaires completed by returnees had been received in the Center. Of these 209 personnel, 200 ejected/extracted, seven bailed out, and two were involved in crash landings.

This paper will address the phase between shootdown and parachute landing of the 207 ejections/extractions/bailouts. The next paper will discuss injuries incurred; following this, the period between parachute landing and capture will be covered; and the final paper will give the view of the POW, as well as reflecting on the three previous papers as one who has been there.

The specific method of shootdown will not be discussed, as it is not considered pertinent to this paper.

What is important is that the emergency was usually catastrophic in nature, which necessitated immediate action and sometimes extraordinary efforts to abandon the aircraft. The conditions of ejection were indeed different from those observed in noncombat operations. As with previous analyses of combat escape experience, delaying the decision to eject is not a factor to be reckoned with. Almost one-half of the returnees stated they were out of the aircraft in less than 30 seconds. Obviously, there was precious little time to assess the situation or try and reach a more desirable bailout area. Delaying the decision to eject has been and continues to be a most critical factor in the outcome of ejection in the noncombat environment.

There were 13 different aircraft involved in in-flight egress by the 207 crewmen, with two aircraft types accounting for 75 percent of the total. The personnel involved included 77 (37 percent) with major injuries, 85 (41 percent) with minor injuries, and 42 (20 percent) crewmen were uninjured. In two cases the degree of injury, if any, was not reported. It should be noted that these are injuries incurred during the escape and evasion phases and do not include those received during or subsequent to capture. The 37 percent major injury rate is significantly higher than observed in noncombat, which averages between 15 and 25 percent. When the conditions of the combat in-flight

escapes are considered, however, it is quite remarkable that the major injury rate was not much higher. The major injury rate among Navy POW returnees was reported to have been 52 percent.

The first indication of flight conditions at time of egress was the attitude of the aircraft. Less than 20 percent of the returnees reported the aircraft to be in a favorable attitude for egress; that is, straight and level or slightly nose-up. More than half were encountering such extreme conditions as rolling, tumbling, spinning, and oscillating. In almost 10 percent of the cases the aircraft was actually in the process of disintegration when the escape sequence was initiated.

Altitude of egress showed some rather interesting findings. Fourteen percent of the returnees reported that escape was initiated at altitudes above 20,000 feet. This is comparable to what has been observed in noncombat experience, but significantly higher than the 3 percent reported by the ejectees in combat mishaps who were subsequently recovered. This increased proportion of high altitude escapes by the returnees is no doubt due to the introduction of the B-52 late in the conflict. Actually, the proportion of escapes at various increments of altitude by the returnees closely approximated that of noncombat

operational experience. For example, 8 percent of the returnees initiated escape below 500 feet as compared to 13 percent among the noncombat escapees. Total escapes below 10,000 feet were 66 percent and 60 percent respectively, and between 10,000 feet and 20,000 feet the proportions were 20 percent and 23 percent respectively. Only 4 percent of the recovered survivors of combat mishaps initiated escape below 500 feet, 79 percent were below 10,000 feet, and 18 percent between 10,000 and 20,000 feet.

The relatively small number of escapes at low altitude by both the returnees and recovered survivors is indicative of absence of the decision factor in the combat environment.

The most startling finding of this review is the very high incidence of extremely high speed ejections. Of those cases in which speed at time of ejection was known or reported, almost one-half (44 percent) occurred at speeds above 450 knots indicated. There were 18 between 450-499 knots indicated airspeed (KIAS) with four major injuries, one of which was attributed to windblast/flailing; 44 were initiated at between 500 and 599 KIAS. There were 20 major injuries in this group, with seven being related to windblast/flailing; finally, there were nine ejections in

excess of 600 KIAS. Four of six major injuries in these cases were due to the effects of windblast. Thus, of 71 total ejections at speeds above 450 knots indicated, 30 (42 percent) crewmen received major injuries, and only 12 (17 percent) were directly attributable to high Q-forces. Noncombat experience has consistently shown a very limited exposure in the higher speed ranges. For example, in a recent 3-year study of 325 noncombat ejections, only seven or 2 percent were initiated at speeds of 450 knots indicated, with one related injury. The combat experience quite dramatically illustrates the effectiveness of open ejection seats at the higher speed regimes. Most of the high-speed ejections involved aircraft ejection seats that utilized lower extremity restraints. System initiation was either by means of the sidearm controls or the seat-mounted D-ring. The fact that the latter was adopted by the USAF as the primary method of ejection in the F-4 may have a bearing on the overall low incidence of upper extremity flail injuries. This experience resulted in several valuable findings concerning extremity restraints. Unstable low density seats must provide some means of restraining the lower extremities at speeds such as encountered in combat environments. Lower extremity restraints had been removed from the ejection seat of one weapon system used early in the conflict because operational experience showed that

they were not necessary, and the crew members were not using them. Shortly after its introduction into the conflict there was a high incidence of serious lower limb injuries among the ejectees. The restraint system was subsequently reinstalled. In another aircraft, the lower extremity restraints, which were already an integral part of the ejection seat, had to be modified to provide better protection against the effects of ejection at extreme speeds.

The problems reported by the returnees during and immediately subsequent to egressing the aircraft provide a real insight into the conditions of escape.

It was not unusual for one individual to encounter multiple egress problems. In all, 448 egress problems were reported by the 207 escapees. The vast majority occurred immediately prior to and during the egress episode. The magnitude of egress problems in combat becomes quite evident when compared to a recent study of 325 noncombat ejections in which difficulties were encountered in 75 instances. As would be expected, the major problems involved the effects of G-forces, windblast, and buffeting. These categories accounted for 66, 68, and 44 cases respectively, or 40 percent of the total. The frequency of these factors is indicative of the conditions of ejection precipitated by combat mishaps. G-forces, windblast, and buffeting

result in subsequent difficulties in locating and actuating ejection controls, assuming a proper ejection posture, and flailing of extremities. These conditions not only cause delays in clearing the aircraft, but are frequently identified as contributing to serious injury during the ejection episode.

The next largest single problem reported was that of fire and smoke in the cockpit or crew compartment area, which was reported in 46 (10 percent) instances. It is understandable why this is a frequently reported problem relative to a combat-damaged aircraft, while it is almost nonexistent in noncombat operations. The attendant confusion and delays in effecting escape due to this cause are obvious. The age-old problem of difficulty in locating and actuating ejection controls was reported by 41 (9 percent) of the USAF returnees. This is also a frequently reported problem in noncombat. No doubt some are the result of other factors, such as confusion, fire/smoke, etc, but many others are directly related to the lack of standardization of ejection controls.

Flailing of extremities occurred in 38 (8 percent) cases. In view of the numbers of ejections reported at very high speeds, it is quite remarkable that this is not much higher. It is even more remarkable that only 12 serious injuries were due to this cause.

In 32 (7 percent) cases, confusion/disorientation/panic/darkness occasioned by the severity of the emergency were reported as detriments to escape. In 22 (5 percent) cases, injuries incurred hampered the escape effort; 21 (5 percent) crewmen were hampered or struck by equipment; 15 (3 percent) struck cockpit structures; seven (2 percent) reported seat/man/parachute involvement; and five (1 percent) experienced seat separation problems.

There were 43 additional egress problems categorized as "other," which were distributed among 13 different causes. These included such things as spinning and tumbling prior to and subsequent to seat separation, anthropometric problems, striking external aircraft structures, survival kit deployment problems, one crewman had failed to remove the ejection seat ground safety pins, and there were 11 system component failures. The latter included the seat-man separator - 1 case; canopy/hatch failure - 4 cases; seat sequencer for fore and aft seats - 1 case; and one crew member's seat failed to fire. He was subsequently able to effect a manual bailout.

The number of reported system failures is quite high; however, combat damage must be considered a strong probability when an aircraft is downed by hostile fire.

Following parachute descent, which was not always uneventful as it was not unusual to take a few rounds from enemy forces in the area, landing was made in varied environs. As would be expected for this area, the largest proportion of parachute landings was in wooded areas, which accounted for over 30 percent of the total. The remainder were distributed among nine additional categories.

In summary, the information provided by the returned POWs has filled a vital life support information gap. The USAF now has a complete data bank concerning the use of life support equipment/systems in the combat environment. The experiences of the returnees have shown that existing Air Force aircraft escape systems have performed exceptionally well under the most adverse conditions. They have also provided the all-important data base that will ultimately enable us to provide the Air Force crew member with the best possible life support equipment systems to sustain him in any environment.

"EJECTION INJURIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
PRISONER OF WAR RETURNEES"

by

LT COL SIDNEY T. LEWIS, USAF, MC,
Medical Officer, Aerospace Medicine

Life Sciences Division
Directorate of Aerospace Safety
Air Force Inspection and Safety Center
Norton Air Force Base, California

CLEARED
for open publication

3 Sep 1974

Directorate for Security Review (OASD-PA)
Department of Defense

Twelfth Annual SAFE Conference and Trade Exhibit

8-12 September 1974
Sahara Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

Sponsored by

SURVIVAL AND FLIGHT EQUIPMENT ASSOCIATION

The views expressed herein are those of the author
and do not necessarily reflect the views of the
US Air Force or the Department of Defense

(281)

A B S T R A C T

The ultimate test of life support equipment is its use under combat conditions. During the Southeast Asia conflict, some United States Air Force aircrews ejected and were captured. They have since been returned. Questionnaires were sent to the returnees to determine the effectiveness of their life support equipment. At the time this paper was being prepared, 209 of the 218 questionnaires completed by returnees documenting their pre-capture experiences had been received. From these 209 questionnaires, injuries occurring before, during, and after ejection were evaluated. There were 165 aircrews who entered hostile territory with some degree of injury, of which 78 had major injuries. The most common injuries were fractures/dislocations with ejection forces and wind-blast the most common causes of the injuries.

The United States Air Force (USAF) provides the best possible equipment for aircrews who support the USAF mission of flying and fighting. Research programs provide the best available weapons systems and training programs provide the expertise to use these systems. Unfortunately, there is always the corollary to flying and fighting and, that is, you have to expect losses. In the event that a weapon system is lost either due to mechanical failure or enemy fire, then the best possible life support equipment must be available to the aircrews to effect their safe escape from the aircraft and return to USAF control.

Data has been available on noncombat use of life support equipment and recommendations have been made to improve equipment based upon lessons learned from this experience. The ultimate test of our success in equipment design comes, however, when this equipment is used under combat conditions. During the Southeast Asia (SEA) conflict, many crew members were forced to abandon their aircraft and were successfully rescued. A series of papers presented at the Tenth Annual Survival and Flight Equipment Symposium covered this experience (1,2,3). Some of our aircrews were not successfully rescued and became prisoners of war. Fortunately, these aircrews have been returned.

The information provided by these returnees fills a void in our understanding of the use of life support equipment in combat. Unfortunately, the story of those killed in action will not be known so that we cannot tell what or how the system failure occurred.

My portion of the evaluation of the data obtained from 209 returnees deals with injuries occurring before, during, or after the escape from the aircraft. As you know, this information was obtained from anonymous questionnaires sent to the returnees. This means that the returnee defined his injury. In no way did I examine the individual or confirm the injuries. The medical evaluation of returnees is a thorough comprehensive program which is the responsibility of the Aerospace Medical Division, USAF School of Aerospace Medicine, Brooks Air Force Base, Texas. My discussion is centered on what the returnee indicated his injuries were and how this affected his ability to escape.

The data from Table I shows that 78 (38%) returnees entered the evasion phase of their shoot down with a major injury. In some instances, there was more than one major injury, whereas in other instances there was a combination of major and minor injury. These individuals were severely compromised in their ability to escape and evade. On the

other hand, 87 (41%) received minor injuries and 42 (20%) received no injuries during their escape from the aircraft.

The types and causes of major injuries are tabulated in Table II. There were 100 major injuries in the 78 returnees who received these types of injuries, with 13 individuals reporting multiple injuries and cause agents. Fractures, sprains, strains, and dislocations were the most common injuries occurring 86 times, with fractures being the most frequent in this group (74). This is not too surprising considering the environment under which the escape occurred. The most frequently fractured bones were the vertebral bodies (34), with ejection forces as the most common cause of these fractures (23). However, parachute landing fall was the cause in four cases. Lower extremity fractures occurred 23 times and upper extremity fractures, 16 times. The fractures to the upper and lower extremities seriously hamper, if not completely negate, an individual's ability to evade. In addition to the fractures, there were 12 instances of sprains/strains and dislocations of the extremities. Thus, of the 100 major injuries, the extremities were injured most frequently (47).

Ejection forces (23) and windblast (25) were the most frequent causes of major injury. This can be attributed to the catastrophic destruction of the aircraft, so that

the crew member did not have the opportunity to assume the proper ejection position or slow the aircraft. In order to keep these injuries in perspective, Table III shows that of 71 individuals who ejected at airspeeds of 450 knots or more, 30 received major injuries of which 13 were injured by windblast. As would be expected, Table IV shows that the most common injuries were fractures or dislocations of the extremities. Even more surprising is the fact that nine individuals ejected at speeds greater than 600 knots, with six receiving major injuries of which four could be attributed to high Q forces. Two individuals received only minor injuries from their high speed ejections and there was no record of injury on one individual.

Parachute landing fall was responsible for 13 major injuries. As would be expected, fractures and dislocations resulted with the lower extremities involved eight times. There were four vertebral injuries from this cause. One of these vertebral injuries was due to landing on the buttocks on a tile roof.

Major injuries due to shrapnel or other debris in the cockpit were not a problem. In only one case did shrapnel cause a major injury. However, generalized burns secondary to aircraft fire occurred five times. In five cases, the individual was knocked unconscious, which

resulted in retrograde amnesia in four individuals.

Shrapnel and aircraft fires were a frequent cause of minor injuries. As an example of the extreme environment to which the aircrews were subjected, one individual received a broken arm and shrapnel wounds when the aircraft was struck by a SAM missile. He was thrown from the aircraft, and during parachute opening shock, he received a broken rib because the parachute chest strap was over the lensatic compass, and a dislocated hip due to a loose parachute harness.

DISCUSSION

Survival in a hostile environment is difficult, to say the least, for an uninjured crew member. For an individual who is injured, the chances of survival are inversely proportional to the degree of injury. That is to say, the greater the injury, the less chance for survival. In this present evaluation, 165 aircrews entered hostile territory with some degree of injury. Their chances of escape were already reduced because of their injuries. Certainly some individuals were not injured, yet were captured. It is impossible to escape if you should happen to land in the midst of the enemy.

Our life support equipment and ejection systems have performed admirably under combat conditions. However,

we should strive for a zero injury rate during aircraft escape and parachute landing. It is apparent that ejection forces and windblast have been the two prime causes of major injury in our returnees. Much has been done to reduce the injury potential of our ejection systems. It appears that more must be done to further improve these systems. During combat conditions, many aircrews cannot assume a proper ejection posture. It appears that improvement of restraint systems could help resolve this problem. Certainly improved seat design could reduce flail injuries from high speed ejections. An advanced ejection seat has been man-rated and is available for use in future high performance aircraft. The lessons learned from our combat experience must be applied to the design and development of future escape systems and life support equipment.

REFERENCES

1. Lehman, Charles A.: Use of Survival Equipment in USAF SEA Escape and Evasion Episodes. Life Sciences Division, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Air Force Inspection & Safety Center, Norton AFB, California, 1972.
2. Munson, Herbert G.: Escape and Evasion Problems in SEA. Life Sciences Division, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Norton AFB, California, 1972.
3. Shannon, Robert H.: Rescue and Recovery of Downed USAF Aircrew Members in SEA, 1 Jan 63 - 31 Dec 71. Life Sciences Division, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Norton AFB, California, 1972.

TABLE I

SEVERITY OF INJURY TO PERSONNEL

<u>Type of Injury</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Major	78	38
Minor	87	41
None	42	20
Unknown/Not Reported	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	209	

TABLE II
TYPES AND CAUSES OF MAJOR NONFATAL INJURIES

Major Injury Type	Ejection Forces	Parachute Landing Fall	C A U S E S				I N J U R Y				Total
			Windblast/Flailing	Seat-Man Chute Involvement	Air-Craft Fire	Struck Air-craft Parts	Chute Opening Shock	Unknown/Not Reported			
Fractures	23	12	15	2	0	1	2	15	4	74	
Skull	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Foot/Ankle	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	
Leg	0	2	7	1	0	1	0	5	0	16	
Arm/Shoulder	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	3	0	12	
Vertebrae	23	4	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	34	
Ribs	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	Crash Land	
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	
Sprains/Strains/Dislocation	0	1	10	0	0	0	1	0	0	12	
Arm/Shoulder	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Leg/Knee	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	
Penetrating Injury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	Shrapnel	
Burns - Generalized	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	
Cerebral Concussion	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	5	
Unknown/Not Reported	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	
TOTALS	23	13	25	2	5	2	3	22	5	100	

NOTE: 13 crew members reported multiple major injuries/cause agents.

TABLE III

INDICATED AIRSPEED AT TIME OF EJECTION
BY INJURY TO PERSONNEL

*IAS (Knots)	T Y P E I N J U R Y				Total
	Major	Minor	None	No Record	
0-99	3	5	2	0	10
100-199	3	4	2	0	9
200-299	6	11	9	1	27
300-349	4(1)	11(1)	6	0	21
350-399	4	6	0	0	10
400-449	5(1)	8(1)	1	0	14
450-499	4(1)	10	4	0	18
500-549	13(5)	13(2)	6	0	32
550-599	7(3)	3(1)	2	0	12
600 +	6(4)	2	0	1	9
Subtotal	55(15)	73(5)	32	2	162
Unknown	23(1)	13(1)	9	0	45
Total	78(16)	86(6)	41	2	207

*Indicated Airspeed

NOTE: Figures in parentheses indicate injuries due to windblast.

TABLE IV

PERSONNEL WITH MAJOR INJURIES ATTRIBUTED TO WINDBLAST

Case Number	Injury Type	IAS (Knots)	Altitude (Feet)	Method of Ejection Initiation
1	Fractured Leg Fractured Elbow	550	3,000	Sidarm
2	Fractured Arm	600	4,000	Sidarm
3	Fractured Leg	550	5,000	Sidarm
4	Fractured Arm Dislocated Shoulder	525	4,000	Sidarm
5	Fractured Arm Fractured Leg	400+	6,000	Not Reported
6	Torn Shoulder Tendons	450	3-5,000	Sequenced
7	Fractured Rib Dislocated Shoulder	500+	1,000	Sidarm
8	Fractured Legs, Bilaterally	525	1,000	D-ring
9	Fractured Arm	620	800	D-ring
10	Fractured Forearm Fractured Upper Arm Dislocated Knee	500	2,000	Sidarm
11	Fractured Legs, Bilaterally	600+	6,000	Sidarm
12	Dislocated Shoulder Knee Injury	600+	500-1,000	D-ring
13	Torn Knee Ligaments	500+	2,000	Sidarm
14	Dislocated Shoulder	570	1,500-2,000	Sidarm
15	Dislocated Shoulder	300	4,500	D-ring
16	Dislocated Shoulder	Unk	1,000	D-ring

USE OF LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT BY AIRCREWS
CAPTURED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

For many years all the military services have collected data on ejection/bailout/survival episodes of crew members who were involved in aircraft accidents. More recently the United States Air Force (USAF) began collecting similar life sciences data from crews recovered after combat losses. The Life Sciences Division of the Directorate of Aerospace Safety has published several papers dealing with the experience of these crews.

This paper and those of Dr Lewis and Mr Shannon provide the first real insight into the life support problems encountered by a third group--our returned prisoners of war (POWs). The returnees were queried by mail as part of a joint HQ USAF and Air War College sponsored study of the POW experience in Southeast Asia (SEA). Col Joe Kittinger developed the form used in that study to query USAF returnees concerning their experience with aircraft egress, life support equipment, and mission data. At the time this paper was being prepared, 209 of the 218 questionnaires completed by returnees documenting their pre-capture experiences had been received, and it is on these 209 questionnaires that our statistics are based. The POW responses were anonymous and voluntary.

It is important to remember that these reports come only from survivors. We know little or nothing of those who received fatal injuries during their ejection/bailout attempts. Also, it seems unlikely that many of those who incurred really severe ejection injuries were able to withstand the rigors of capture and confinement. We have no information on these individuals either.

This paper will analyze the experiences of the POWs who returned, and compare parts of them with the experiences of successful evaders and noncombat survivors. Footnotes would complicate the text and will not be used; however, grateful credit is given to the authors

listed in the bibliography. Some quotes from the returnees are included, not because they are particularly representative of a general feeling, but because they are interesting and tend to give insight into the problems these men faced.

The returnees entered their ordeals under extremely trying circumstances. In general, the speed of their ejections, as reported by Mr Shannon, was far above what is normally encountered outside of combat. As a result of this, and the violent break-up of many of their aircraft, wounds sustained in flight, or injuries incurred during parachute landing, more than one out of five was incapacitated when he entered his evasion challenge, as reported by Dr. Lewis. These injuries had a very direct bearing on the outcome of their evasion attempts.

"I believe that only severe injuries prevented me from evading and possible rescue."

This man had burns on face and neck, a compressed disc, internal injuries and bleeding, two possible breaks in his pelvis, and numerous cuts and bruises. He still evaded for 20 hours.

The flight gear worn by these aircrews was a significant factor in their escape from combat-damaged aircraft. As the canopy was jettisoned prior to ejection, the flight helmet served to protect the crewman from windblast, buffeting, and seat-man contact. However, 19.6 percent of the returnees who ejected (and reported the status of their helmets) said that they lost their helmets during the ejection sequence. In spite of the preponderance of high-speed ejections, this rate is close to the noncombat helmet loss rate (16.6 percent) or the

successful evaders' rate (16.4 percent). Generally, the returnees' rate of helmet loss increased quite uniformly with speed, but there is a dramatic drop in the curve between 450 and 500 knots. This may be due to the relatively small sample at that speed range (20). The low rate between 200 knots and 350 knots was also somewhat unexpected, but may be due to the optimum stability of many of our ejection seats in that speed range.

As shown in a previous study, configuration of the helmet during the ejection/bailout sequence is a key factor in its retention or loss. When the returnee wore his helmet in the optimum configuration (visor down, chin strap and nape strap snug), he had the best chance of retaining it. Only 15 percent of the helmets so configured were lost. This compares to about 12 percent for noncombat situations. With the visor down but one or both of the straps loose, his chances were nearly as good; 16 percent were lost (11 percent in the non-combat study). However, when the visor was up at the moment of escape, the loss rate jumped to 26 percent (for noncombat, 30.5 percent). In view of the high speed of most of these ejections, the relatively good retention rate may be partially explained by considering that crew members in combat usually keep their emergency equipment tight and well fitted. In day to day noncombat flying, they are more lax in this respect. The configuration of the successful evaders' helmets is not known.

Only four helmet failures were reported by the returnees. Three involved broken visors, while one helmet was struck by a cannon shell

fired from a MIG. The aircraft canopy and helmet shell absorbed enough of the impact that the pilot was not seriously hurt.

The 209 reporting returnees listed significant features describing their landing sites. Many used several adjectives to portray a clear picture of the area. For example, one man reported landing through trees onto hard ground and rocks on a steep slope--all four descriptions were considered for this study.

More than a third (38 percent) of the returnees began their evasion attempts in thick brush or trees. Thirty-one percent impacted on hard ground and 16 percent on soft ground. Ten percent hit amid rocks, and more than one-fifth made their parachute landings on steep slopes or ravines. In spite of the unfavorable terrain, there were only 12 major injuries (5.8 percent) and 26 minor injuries (12.6 percent) attributed to parachute landing. In a recent 3-year period, noncombat ejectees experienced a parachute landing fall (PLF) major injury rate of 8.6 percent.

Only 3 percent of the returnees landed in water compared to 19 percent of the successful evaders. Obviously, those crews who made it "feet wet" before ejecting fared better than those who were forced to eject over land.

Capture came rapidly for most of the returnees, just as rescue was quick for most of those who made it back. Many of the returnees were literally captured as their feet touched the ground. Within their first 2 hours on the ground, 65 percent of the returnees had been captured. In that same interval, 49 percent of the successful evaders were rescued. At the end of 6 hours on the ground, 70 percent of the returnees had been captured, and 75 percent of the evaders

rescued. In the densely populated sections of the enemy area, long evasion episodes were not the rule. This would probably be true in future daylight operations in any densely populated area of the world.

Even so, there were some amazing, extended evasions among the returnees. Six of them avoided the enemy for more than 3 days. Of these, two lasted a week and one, 8 days. One, who was captured immediately, escaped and evaded for two weeks before being shot and recaptured. In a densely populated country where an occidental stands out like a sore thumb, this is a tribute to their courage and training. In the noncombat situation, previous studies have shown that 90 percent of accident survivors are rescued within 6 hours.

Life support equipment frequently proved valuable, even for the aircrews who were captured immediately. Many used their radios while descending in their chutes to contact wingmen or rescue forces. Thus, even when no rescue was possible, the psychological boost of knowing that relatives would be notified of their safe escape from the aircraft was an important factor. Also, contact with wingmen or other aircraft during the descent denied the captors the probable psychological advantage of telling the POWs that no one knew where they were or that they were alive. Almost half (48 percent) of the returnees used their survival radios before capture. (This rate is understandably higher for successful evaders or noncombat ejectees--80 and 62 percent respectively.) One man summed up a rather general feeling, "The survival radio is the most important piece of gear in this situation." Six returnees lost their radios and 18 (18 percent) of those who used radios experienced failures. Some of these were

extremely critical.

"I lost all radio communication after one hour. Rescue would have been successful with a radio. The chopper was overhead."

"I was flying a rescue helicopter, and probably would have been picked up if I hadn't fallen on my radio and broke the damn thing."

"One radio battery was dead; the other lasted less than one hour. This cost me 6½ years as a POW."

These incidents occurred in 1965 and 1966, before daily battery checks were instituted. Two individuals stated their radios were inadequate, and one expressed a need for a special transmitter:

"I needed a transmitter which could be hidden on a bare body, capable of sending signals, so my movements after capture could have been tracked."

Admittedly, this is a far-out request, especially since it is common practice to strip captives immediately after capture. Such a transmitter would have to be hidden within the body.

The personnel locator beacon was reported used by 46 POWs (22 percent)--nearly as frequently as among those who were recovered (27 percent) and more often than the noncombat group (14 percent). During part of the reporting period, beacons in some aircraft were nonautomatic.

Following radios and beacons, the most used item was water. Nearly all who were forced to leave their aircraft in Southeast Asia (SEA) expressed a profound need for water.

"The need for adequate water cannot be overemphasized."

"All Aircrews should carry water."

Thirty-six (17 percent) of the returnees specifically mentioned using water prior to capture. Five others (2.4 percent) needed more water

than they carried. One cut a banana tree and drank the water which collected in the stump--a procedure taught in the Jungle Survival School. Two reported losing their water flasks during ejection, and one flask failed.

Knives are probably the most classic of survival tools. They were used by 13 percent (27) of the returnees and 10 percent of the successful evaders. Six returnees lost their knives, and one found his inadequate--he wanted a machete, a questionable request when silence and covert action are necessary to avoid capture. However, even small knives served well.

"I lost the leg of my 'G' suit due to violent ejection--with it went my MC-1 knife and flashlight. The small knife in the parachute was invaluable."

Another man was captured because of a problem with his knife.

"Couldn't unfasten straps on my survival kit. Couldn't cut them, because survival knife was tied to my harness with nylon, and I couldn't untie the knot. Couldn't cut the knot, because I lost my pocket knife on ejection. Finally, I forced the knife blade through the leather sheath, and was cutting the straps when I was surrounded."

First aid kits were next in order of usage--7 percent. (Compared to 4 percent for the successful evaders.) The same number of returnees, 15 (7 percent), reported opening and using items from their survival kits. The others got along with the items in their survival vests.

In previous studies it was reported that about 5 percent of the aircrews rescued in SEA used their sidearms. Interestingly, the same rate of usage applies to the returnees. However, two returnees expressed conflicting views of personal weapons:

"Rather than a large caliber sidearm which was a good signaling device but a poor survival weapon, aircrews should have a small caliber

weapon with a silencer and large clips of ammunition, such as a .22 with a silencer."

"I continue to have reservations about carrying a weapon. I was captured immediately--another American weapon for their arsenal."

Ten (5 percent) returnees reported using their flashlights. This was somewhat surprising in view of the need to remain hidden. However, in the deep blackness of a jungle night, some illumination is required for most tasks. Only 2 percent of the successful evaders reported using flashlights.

Signals have predominated among survival items in previous studies. For example, about half of the successful evaders in SEA reported using visual signals such as flares, strobe lights, mirrors, or tracers. In contrast, only 26 (13 percent) of the returnees said they used these signals. In most cases there was simply no one to signal, because they were in an area where rescue was impossible or there was no time. Only one man reported a signal failure--a penguin flare. Four individuals stated they needed visual signals and didn't have them.

A small percentage of the returnees reported needing items of equipment in addition to what they carried. However, there was no trend. Among the items mentioned were burn ointment, burn treatment instructions, rations, bandages, luminous button compass, morphine, machette, map, and a helmet radio jack. None of these items was reported as needed by more than 1 percent of the returnees responding to the questionnaire, even though this question was specifically asked. Evasion in the heart of a hostile country is a tough challenge. One returnee said the item he needed most was "vanishing cream." Another wanted wings. Still another expressed a more practical requirement:

"I was captured on the third day by a dog. Perhaps pepper in the survival kit would help when the enemy uses dogs."

One felt he was carrying too much equipment:

I feel we were overloaded with equipment for this environment--to the point of being encumbered in the cockpit."

Such comments were definitely the exception rather than the rule, and most of the reporting returnees were very satisfied with their life support equipment.

Although water landings were quite rare, two individuals used their rafts, and four used life preservers. One of these made a pertinent observation:

"Recommend a method be devised for automatic actuation of LPU upon immersion in water.... I was rendered unconscious by the wind-blast from an excessively high-speed ejection. I remained unconscious for about 15 minutes. Had I landed in a nearby river, or any body of water, I would have drowned. How many did we lose in VN this way?"

The Air Force is actively developing an automatic life preserver.

Only five failures of flotation equipment were reported; however, two life rafts were lost during the ejection sequence and three failed to inflate when the kit was deployed.

The returnees experienced many survival/rescue problems in addition to their injuries. Thirty-four (16 percent) said they suffered from thirst, but only six (3 percent) reported acute hunger.

"I was weak and tired from no food--lost mental acuity. Many people around. If I'd been stronger I probably could have prevented their seeing me and continued to a safe area."

He'd been evading for four days.

One-fifth of the returnees stated the topography worked against them. Almost as many (17 percent) said they had communications problems. A high-speed ejection from a burning or disintegrating aircraft

is a harrowing experience at best. When it happens over enemy territory, the physical and psychological pressures are enormous. Fourteen percent of the returnees said they were confused, dazed, or disoriented for varying periods after ejecting. Weather had an adverse effect on 10 percent, and 5 percent complained of exposure.

"It was very cool and rainy, and I was probably in slight shock. This, coupled with the cool weather, made exposure a possibility." Even Southeast Asia is not always warm—at least at night, in the mountains.

Fatigue or poor physical condition (8 percent and 4 percent respectively) played a role in some evasion attempts. Seven men (3 percent) had trouble with insects or animals.

Of course the enemy was the biggest factor in all these cases. Frequently the location of the parachute landing made the outcome of the evasion attempt a foregone conclusion. As one man wryly put it:

"Don't parachute into an enemy camp!"

In other cases injury was the deciding factor—and one returned pilot suggested:

"Don't get hurt."

Probably the best summation of all was simply, "WHEW!"

CONCLUSIONS

Although we normally think of life support or survival equipment as serving to get our crew members home as soon as possible after a catastrophic airborne emergency, the returnee reports show another facet. Even when the evasion attempt is unsuccessful, life support and survival equipment can help keep the crewman in the best possible shape

to withstand the rigors of capture. In the case of the radio and other signals, it can also provide a great psychological boost during a most trying experience. The extreme consequences of even a small failure rate in life support or survival equipment are highlighted in a combat environment.

TABLE I

AIRSPEED AT EJECTION*
VS
HELMET LOSS

<u>Airspeed</u>	<u>Number Involved</u>	<u>Helmets Lost</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-99	9	1	11
100-199	9	1	11
200-299	27	2	8
300-349	20	1	5
350-399	10	2	20
400-449	14	4	29
450-499	19	1	5
500-549	31	11	36
550-599	9	5	55
600+	9	4	44
Unknown	<u>26</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>15</u>
TOTAL	183*	36	19.6

*24 individuals gave no information about their helmets.

TABLE II

HELMET CONFIGURATION
VS
HELMET LOSS

<u>Configuration</u>	<u>Involved</u>	<u>Lost</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Optimum	100	15	15
Visor Down (Chin or Nape Strap Loose)	32	5	16
Visor Up (Chin or Nape Unspecified)	38	10	26
Unspecified	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>46*</u>
Total Ejections	183**	36	

*Most of these were unconscious from the effects of the ejection.

**24 individuals gave no information about their helmets.

TABLE III

LANDING ENVIRONMENT

<u>Environment</u>	<u>Number Reporting</u>	<u>Percent* Reporting</u>
Marsh/Swamp/Paddy	31	15
Hard Ground	65	31
Soft Ground	33	16
Ravine/Steep Slope	45	22
Rocks	21	10
Trees/Thick Brush	80	38
In Trees	(28)	
Through Trees	(39)	
Fireball (In or Near)	8	4
Water	6	3
Shallow	(4)	(2)
Deep	(2)	(1)
Hills/Mountains	3	1
Buildings	3	1
Unknown/Not Reported	<u>17</u>	8
	312	

*Many individuals reported more than one environmental situation.

TABLE IV

TIME BEFORE CAPTURE

<u>Duration of Evasion</u>	<u>Number Reporting</u>	<u>Percent Reporting</u>
Immediate Capture*	63	30
1-29 Minutes	45	22
30-59 Minutes	12	6
1 hr-1:59	14	7
2 hrs-5:59	11	5
6 hrs-11:59	7	3
12 hrs-23:59	13	6
24 hrs-47:59	7	3
48 hrs-71:59	4	2
72 hrs-Over**	6	3
Unknown/Not Reported	27	13

*One man was captured immediately, but escaped and evaded for 2 weeks before recapture.

**3 days - 1
4 days - 1
5 days - 1
7 days - 2
8 days - 1

TABLE V

'LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT USED

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number Who Used</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Radio	101	48
PLB	46	22
Water	38	17
Knife	27	13
Weapon	11	5
Flashlight	10	5
Voice Attenuator	10	5
Survival Kit	15	7
First Aid Kit	15	7
MK-13 Flares	7	3
Pengun Flares	5	2
Signal Devices	6	3
(Unspecified)		
Strobe Light	4	2
Tracers	4	2
LPU	4	2
Raft	2	1
Go Pills	1	-

TABLE VI

LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT
LOST, FAILED, INADEQUATE

<u>Item</u>	<u>Lost</u>	<u>Failed</u>	<u>Inadequate</u>
Radio	6	18 (18%)	2 (2%)
PLB		3	
Couldn't Silence		4	
Water/Container	2	1 (3%)	
Knife	6	0	1
Flashlight	1		
Attenuator	1		
Survival Kit	6	10	1
First Aid Kit	2	1	
MK-13 Flares	2		
Pengun Flares		1	
Signal Devices	2		
(Unspecified)			
Raft	2	3	
Helmet	36 (19.6%)	3 (Visors)	1
Gloves	8 (4%)		1

TABLE VII

EQUIPMENT NEEDED, BUT NOT AVAILABLE

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number Who Needed</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Water	5	2.4
Radio	3	1.4
Mirror	2	<1
Burn Ointment	2	<1
Rations	2	<1
Bandages	2	<1
Compass (luminous)	2	<1
Flashlight	1	<.5
Morphine	1	<.5
Machette	1	<.5
Pengun	1	<.5
Burn Instructions	1	<.5
Map	1	<.5
Signals	1	<.5
Helmet Radio Jack	<u>1</u>	<u><.5</u>
	26	12.4

TABLE VIII

SURVIVAL PROBLEMS

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number Reporting</u>	<u>Percent Reporting</u>
Incapacitated by Injury	44	21
Thirst	34	16
Topography	41	20
Communication	36	17
Darkness	31	15
Confused, Dazed, Disoriented	30	14
Rescue Vehicle/Personnel (None, delayed, shot down, limitations)	51	24
Weather	21	10
Fatigue	16	8
Enemy in Area	21	10
Lack of Survival Equipment	10	5
Exposure	10	5
Poor Physical Condition	9	4
Animals, Insects, etc	7	3
Hunger	6	3
Survival Equipment Problems	4	2
Miscellaneous	3	1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Lehman, Lt Col Charles A. Helmets and Head Protection in USAF Ejections, 1968-1972. Norton AFB: Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Life Sciences Division, 1973.
2. Shannon, Robert H. Rescue and Recovery of Downed USAF Aircrew Members in Southeast Asia, 1 Jan 1963-31 Dec 1971. Norton AFB: Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Life Sciences Division, 1972.
3. Lehman, Lt Col Charles A. Use of Survival Equipment in USAF SEA Escape and Evasion Episodes. Norton AFB: Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Life Sciences Division, 1972.
4. USAF Escape System Review, 1 Jan 1970-31 Dec 1972. Norton AFB: Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Life Sciences Division, Dec 1973.
5. Munson, Maj Herbert G. A Study of USAF Survival Accidents, 1 Jan 1965-31 Dec 1969. Norton AFB: Deputy Inspector General for Inspection and Safety, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Life Sciences Division, 1971.
6. Southeast Asia Escape, Evasion, and Recovery Experience, 1 Jan 1963-31 Dec 1971. Norton AFB: Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, Directorate of Aerospace Safety, Life Sciences Division, Oct 1972.